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MIDRASH SIFRE ON NUMBERS

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SELECTIONS FROM EARLY RABBINIC SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATIONS

TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW, WITH BRIEF ANNOTATIONS, ETC., BY

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INTRODUCTION

I

Short Account of the Midrash

The *Sifre* to the Book of Numbers, from which a series of selections is printed in the translation that follows this Introduction, is one of a group of halakic midrashim, or commentaries, largely concerned with the exposition of legal rules, which form a group by themselves in Jewish Midrashic literature, and are of first-rate importance. This group embraces the *Mekilta*, a commentary on Exodus xii–xxiii. 19 (with the addition of two short comments on xxxi. 12–17, and xxxv. 1–3); the *Sifra* (= "the book"), also called *tôrath kōhănîm* ("Law of Priests") on Leviticus; and *Sifre* (= "Books") on Numbers v.–xxxvi. and the whole of Deuteronomy. As will be shown below, the *Sifre* on Numbers embodies the work of a school distinct from the school that is represented by the *Sifre* on Deuteronomy.

In an important article, published in the *J.Q.R.* (new series) xi. 169–196 (Oct. 1920), on "the name of the Mekilta," J. Z. Lauterbach has shown that the Mekilta originally had no special name attached to it, but was grouped with the Midrashim on Numbers and Deuteronomy, under the general title of *Sifre de Be Rab* [*i. e.* "Books of the teacher's house" (or "School"), perhaps]; later, however, it was singled out from the rest, and given the special descriptive title of "Mekilta" (more correctly "mekilāthā"), *i.e.* "tractates" or "collections" of halakic rules. This name was specially given to the Midrash on Exodus (in the *Sifre*) because it consists of nine tractates, each one of which "forms an independent treatise, dealing with one topic

or one group of laws, or one event or period in the history of Israel as recorded in the book of Exodus." [1]

All three Midrashim (or four if the Midrash on Numbers and Deuteronomy be counted separately) are halakic in character, but with a considerable admixture of haggadic elements.[2] They may be regarded as the result of an attempt on the part of the teachers of the Law to justify, in a popular way, *halakoth*, or traditional rules and laws of life and ritual, against the objections of the Sadducees, by deducing them from the text of Scripture. "The Talmud does this in the form of a commentary on the Halakah; it takes tradition by tradition, and seeks a Biblical basis for each. In the halakic Midrash, however, another course was adopted. A running commentary was compiled to the legal parts of the Pentateuch; verse by verse the Halakah was derived from the text." [3] This fact will explain the Midrashic form of the work, for a Midrash is essentially a commentary, the word itself, which means "investigation," being applied to the "investigation," by all exegetical means at command, of all possible hidden meanings and applications of Scripture.[4] The group of halakic Midrashim to which our Midrash belongs is of the highest importance. It contains the

[1] The more commonly accepted explanation that the word = "rule," *i.e.* "rule for deducing the halakah from Scripture," is less probable.

[2] The term "halakah" ("halakic") means "rule," "binding law," and is applied to the legal element in the oral law and the Rabbinical discussions and decisions dependent on it (especially the rules and decisions embodied in the Mishnah and Talmud): "haggadah" = "narration," "telling," has acquired a general sense embracing all non-halakic interpretation or illustration of Scripture (including parables, stories, folk-lore, etc.). See further *R.W.S.*², p. 78.

[3] Abrahams, *A Short History of Jewish Literature* (1906), p. 30.

[4] See further *R.W.S.*², p. 78 f. and *Short Survey*, pp. 57 ff.

oldest material embodied in Jewish literature of this kind. In fact, these books may be described as the oldest commentaries of a Biblical kind that have come down to us, if we except the rather different kind of exegesis that is exemplified in some of Philo's works. In their original form, these Midrashim go back to the earlier part of the second century A.D. (to a time anterior to the Bar-Kokba revolt, A.D. 132–135). The disciples of the famous teacher Jochanan b. Zakkai, viz. Ishmael, Akiba, and Eleazar of Modin, appear to have redacted the principal contents of the exposition on the basis of the still older and anonymous stratum of the exegetical tradition.

Two markedly divergent tendencies corresponding to the two opposed schools of R. Ishmael b. Elisha and his contemporary R. Akiba (first half of second century A.D.), are represented in these halakic Midrashim. As is well known, Akiba insisted upon a meticulously literal exposition, which saw some definite significance in every word and even letter of the text, and pressed this in its exegesis; whereas Ishmael maintained that the Torah was written in ordinary human speech, and is to be interpreted accordingly. The Mekilta and *Sifre* to Numbers reflect the spirit of Ishmael's school; while *Sifra* (on Leviticus) and *Sifre* to Deuteronomy represent rather the point of view of Akiba and his school:

It is true, teachers are mentioned in these Midrashim who lived till the last quarter of the second century, but rarely, and usually with indications of the previous existence of the comment for which they are made responsible. In their present final form all these works, after being brought from Palestine to Babylonia, were edited in the Babylonian Schools (fourth to fifth century, A.D.). They have gone through the hands of a compiler who has sometimes rearranged the text.

The principal Rabbinical authorities who are cited

in this Midrash include the following Tannaim: R. Ishmael and his pupils, R. Josiah and R. Jonathan; R. Nathan; R. Eliezer, and R. Yiṣḥaḳ (Isaac). These belong partly to the latter part of the first and the earlier part of the second century, or to the middle and latter parts of the second century. More will be said about R. Ishmael and his school below. The special interest of our Midrash in the Halakah is reflected in the fact that the comment begins with Numbers v. (where the legal element emerges), the earlier chapters of *Numbers* being ignored. The text of the *Sifre* in Numbers is divided in our printed editions (in accordance with the *editio princeps*, Venice, 1545) into 161 sections of varying length.

The following passage (§ 19), which is part of the important section dealing with the laws for the punishment of adultery, will illustrate the general character of the Midrash as predominantly halakic; a further extract will serve to illustrate the occasional mixture of haggadic elements. The comment is on the verse (Num. v. 28): *If the woman be not defiled, but be clean.* On this Midrash proceeds:

R. Ishmael says: "Would Scripture proclaim her clean if she were defiled? The words imply that as soon as an evil report had been spread about a woman she is prohibited from living with her husband." R. Shimeon b. Jochai says: "It should not enter into thy mind that the merit depends upon the bitter water. But why does it say: *If the woman be not defiled, but be clean?* Because it says (Lev. xx. 10): *If a man commit adultery with another man's wife* [she shall be put to death]; from which passage we only know that if there were witnesses who warned her [and yet she committed adultery], that she should be put to death; and if there were witnesses, but they did not warn her, she is not to be punished by death. But I might suppose that, in the latter case, because she is free from the punishment of death, she should be allowed to live with her husband? [This is not so.] You can deduce [the prohibition] by inference: If in a case of uncertainty she is not allowed to live with her husband [for the time being],

the more must it be so when it is certain (although the witnesses did not warn her), that she is not allowed to live with her husband. She is included in the law contained in Deut. xxiv. 1." [1]

This passage is an interesting example of the Rabbinical development of the old legal code. It shows clearly how the old barbarous law enjoining the infliction of the death-penalty on the guilty parties in the case of proved adultery, under certain circumstances, had been modified. If it could be shown that the guilty party had not been warned by witnesses, it was not to be enforced; in all such cases the husband was to be compelled to divorce the guilty wife. It is particularly interesting to notice that this modified Jewish law is also enjoined in the *Shepherd* of Hermas (Mand. x. 1), who declares that a wife proved to be guilty of adultery is not to be allowed to cohabit with her husband, who, however, is not allowed to marry another.[2] The Rabbis took care to see, by the multiplication of legal checks, that the death-penalty was in practice never enforced. The discussions in the Rabbinical literature of the methods by which this penalty was to be carried out are all theoretical. In fact the Rabbis were entirely opposed to the infliction of capital-punishment.[3]

The following Haggadic passage (from § 78) will illustrate the non-halakic element which is found in the Midrash, but to no very great extent. It is based upon Num. x. 29 ff. (*And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law*, etc.). The Midrash proceeds :

Why was he called *Hobab?* Because he *loved* the torah (*ḥābab* = " to love "). For among proselytes we do not find one who loved the torah as much as Jethro.

[1] *When a man taketh a wife and marrieth her, then, if she find no favour in his eyes because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, he shall write her a bill of divorcement*, etc.

[2] Cf. *Divorce in the New Testament* (Box and Gore), p. 47.

[3] Cf. *Op. cit.*, p. 31 f.

And as Jethro himself loved the torah, so did his descendants, as it is said (Jer. xxxv. 2): *Go to the house of the Rechabites, and speak to them the word of the Lord.* When they saw that that House (the Temple) was going to be destroyed, they considered it (the event) as if it had already happened, and *dwelt in tents* (as a sign of sorrow), according to what our father Jonadab commanded us. And because they did obey the commandment of their father Jonadab, God raised from among them scribes, as it is said (1 Chron. ii. 55): *And the family of scribes also. These are the Kenites that came of Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.*

A number of lengthy allegorical interpretations of the names of the sub-divided families follow. These are taken fancifully to indicate the reasons why God specially favoured them. But, as has already been pointed out, the Haggadic element in this Midrash is relatively small. It is mainly concerned with the legalistic elements in the Book of Numbers, the purely narrative chapters being only dealt with occasionally and by way of selection. In some cases (*e.g.* in § 42, end) passages of this kind have found their way into the text from the margin.

II

R. Ishmael and his School

[*Literature*: Bacher, *Ag. d. Tann.* i. 2, 238–263; ii. 335–350, 351–364; Dérenburg, *Essai*, ch. xxiii, 384 ff.; *J.E.* vi. 648–650; vii. 296, 233 f. and vi. 204; further references in Strack, *Einleitung*, 5, 124 f. and 128.]

Ishmael b. Elisha is one of the most considerable and commanding figures among the Rabbis who were prominent during the first part of the second century A.D. His early years are involved in obscurity, and to some extent also in legend. He appears to have been a boy at the time of the great catastrophe in

A.D. 70, and to have been taken into captivity by the Romans, from which he was redeemed by the famous teacher and Tanna R. Joshua b. Ḥananya, who made it possible for him to return to Palestine. Ishmael was himself the grandson of a wealthy priestly family, being probably the descendant of the High Priest of the same name.

In Palestine, after the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) Rabbinical schools were established both in the north, in Galilee (especially in Sepphoris), and in the south, especially in the district abutting on the western shore of the Dead Sea, known as *Daroma* or "the south country." It was in this district, which was by its remoteness and inaccessibility rendered comparatively immune from the attentions of the Roman government, that some of the Jewish *émigrés* settled. The district appears to have suffered less than the rest of Palestine from the ravages of the Roman wars, and was very fertile, the oil of Tekoa, the dates of Zoar, and the vines of Engedi being famous, even in this late period. It was in Kephar Aziz, one of the small towns of this district on the borders of Edom, that Ishmael made his home. Possibly he established a school there, and on one occasion was visited in the same locality by his benefactor, R. Joshua.

In the period immediately following the catastrophe of A.D. 70 the principal seat of Jewish learning in Palestine was established at Jamnia (Jabneh). Here under Jochanan b. Zakkai Judaism had a centre, and it was at Jamnia that the reconstituted Sanhedrin met. In the deliberations of this body Ishmael took a prominent part. He is mentioned in this connexion in the Mishnah (*Eduyyoth* ii. 4) as having enunciated certain *dicta* in the presence of the assembled scholars "in the vineyard" at Jabneh; and when the seat

of the Sanhedrin was transferred to Usha in Galilee he attended its sessions there (T.B. *Baba bathra* 28*b*). According to some scholars he suffered martyrdom in the Hadrianic war (A.D. 132–135), being one of the martyrs of Bethar. He thus shared a similar fate to that of his renowned opponent in controversy, R. Akiba, who perished in the same crisis. But this is not certain.

Ishmael was one of the masters of halakic exegesis, and founded a school whose work is largely represented in the halakic Midrashim, especially in the Mekilta (on Exodus) and the *Sifre* on Numbers. Of his teachers only Neḥunya ben ha-Ḳanah is specially mentioned; but doubtless he learned much from Joshua b. Ḥananya.

In his exegesis he found himself in opposition to Akiba and his school. He insisted that the torah must be interpreted as a document written in the language of man, and was opposed to the strained and forced exegesis favoured by Akiba. Thus he maintained that the injunction of Joshua i. 8 (*This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein*) is not to be taken literally. Against Akiba he refused to allow that pleonastic words or letters in the text of Scripture could be taken as a basis for new deductions. In a discussion of this kind which he had with Akiba, he is reported (T.B. *Sanh.* 51*b*) to have exclaimed: "Wilt thou indeed decree death by fire on the strength of a single letter?" [1] He embodied the principles of his exegesis in a set of thirteen hermeneutic rules, which were universally accepted by his successors, and have found a permanent place in the Synagogue Prayer-

[1] Cited in *J.E.*, 649*b*.

book.[1] They are also prefixed to the halakic Midrash on Leviticus (*Sifra*), which is a product of the School of R. Akiba.

But even in the application of his own rules Ishmael, true to his fundamental principle, would not allow himself to be enslaved to a literal enforcement in all cases. He required the express sanction of Scripture for the infliction of punishments. In grave offences: "he would not consent to attach a sentence of death, or even a fine, to a crime or misdemeanour on the strength of a mere inference, however logical, where no such punishment is stated in Scripture (T.J. *Ab. zara* v. 45*b*), or to draw a rule from a law itself based on an inference (T.J. Ḳid. i. 59*a*)." [2] He, in fact, laid the foundation and developed the application of the "logical method by which laws may be deduced from laws" and formulated the rules by which important decisions can be arrived at, founded upon the natural and unforced meaning of the Scriptural text. The method was dialectical but controlled by sound common sense, and guarded from extravagance by soundly conceived checks.

His school is represented by two names which often occur together in the halakic Midrashim, R. Jonathan (or Nathan) and R. Josiah. Both Jonathan and Josiah were trained together in the school of Ishmael, and mastered his dialectical method. They applied this to the exegesis of the Scripture text, by which method they deduced the halakah from the relevant Biblical passages. Their discussions and arguments are embodied mainly in the Mekilta and our Midrash (in some seventy passages). Apart from a single sentence in *Pirḳe Aboth*

[1] See the authorised Daily Prayer-book (ed. Singer), p. 13 f. (*Baraitha of R. Ishmael*).
[2] *J.E., ibid.*

iv. 9, neither Rabbi figures in the official Mishnah text. This may be due, as has been suggested, to the fact that R. Judah, the compiler of the Mishnah, made the basis of his official text an earlier compilation by R. Meir; and both Meir and Rabbi (Judah) followed Akiba in preference to Ishmael. Another Tannā, who seems to have belonged to this circle, and was a younger contemporary of Jonathan and Josiah, was Abba Ḥanin, who is the authority for many halakic Midrashim (seventeen in the text of our Midrash), which he transmits in the name of Eliezer b. Hyrkanos, whose disciple he may have been. There is some reason to suppose that both Jonathan and Josiah, after the death of Ishmael, may have come, to some extent, under the influence of Akiba's school. But this fact—if it be a fact—has not obscured the character of their work to any serious extent, as exponents of Ishmael's system of exegesis as embodied in Mekilta and our Midrash.

Attention has been called to the fact that though Ishmael's rules of exegesis exercised so profound an influence on the logical method of Rabbinic dialectic, he himself is not often referred to or cited in the text of the official Mishnah,[1] which was finally redacted in its present form by R. Judah the holy (often referred to as "Rabbi" alone), the Patriarch, about A.D. 190–200. This is true in an even greater degree of his disciples Josiah and Jonathan, who, except in the case of the latter in a single doubtful passage of *Pirḳe Aboth* [iv. 11 (13)],[2] are never referred to in the text of the Mishnah at all. They are constantly cited together in *Mekilta*

[1] On the other hand, Akiba is referred to in the Mishnah more than 270 times.

[2] There is a variant reading "R. Joḥanan." See *Sayings* (ed. Oesterley) *ad loc.*

and *Sifre* (to Numbers). How is this remarkable silence of the official Mishnah to be accounted for?

The schools of the south (Darom) seem to have worked more or less independently of those which had Jabneh and Sepphoris as their centre. Dérenburg (*Essai*, p. 389) suggests that there was a certain amount of hostility to the southern schools on the part of the others. He says: "Our Talmuds, redacted under the influence of the schools of Jabneh and of Sepphoris, ignore, as much as possible, the debates of the schools of the south." In this connexion it is interesting to recall the fact that Ishmael was the descendant of a distinguished priestly family—he was probably the grandson of a High Priest—and as such inherited, to some extent, the broad, cultivated outlook of the best Sadducean families. Whereas Akiba may be taken to represent the extreme views that sometimes went with Pharisaism, Ishmael stands for a more sober, a saner, exegesis which may have been dictated by an inherited tendency to base decisions upon reason and judgment undeflected by heat and passion. This view of Ishmael is, perhaps, confirmed by the references which occur in the Rabbinical literature to his character and disposition. A saying is quoted in his name in *Pirḳe Aboth* [iii. 16 (18)] which may be rendered: *Be indulgent with the hoary head, and be kind to the black-haired* [= the young]; *and meet every man with cheerfulness*. Ishmael practised what he preached. The notices concerning him give the impression of one endowed with a kindly, tolerant disposition, who was fatherly and benevolent, and withal possessed of a spirit of sweet reasonableness which illuminated both his thought and actions. His great controversial rival was Akiba, who was martyred about the year A.D. 132. Akiba, who was a man of genius, reconstituted the old halakah

by laying the foundations of a codex of religious law and practice, which developed later into the Mishnah. The older halakah was represented in the form of the halakic Midrash, or commentary based upon the text of the legal passages of Scripture (the Law). This older form (*i.e.* the halakic Midrash) was not a convenient one for the purposes of practical usefulness. It was obviously desirable that the rules governing religious duty and practice should be classified and arranged in clear and handy form. It was this need that was met by the production, by gradual stages, of the Mishnah, and its inception is due to Akiba. The older Midrashic form had been dictated by the exigencies of the controversy with the Sadducees. The latter questioned the legitimacy of the traditional religious laws on the ground that they could not be proved from the letter of the Law. It was necessary, therefore, that a systematic attempt should be made to deduce these laws from the Scriptural text. Hence the production of halakic Midrashim. When Akiba set to work to reconstitute the old halakah, and codify it in a new form, it might seem likely that he would have discarded the old Midrash-form altogether. Instead of doing so, he produced a new form of halakic Midrash, edited from the point of view of his own school, and represented by the halakic Midrashim on Leviticus (*Sifra*) and Deuteronomy (Sifrē) (on Deut. xii.–xxvi.).

Doubtless Akiba's procedure was dictated by the force of circumstances. The old Midrash-form was in possession of the field, and could not be at once displaced. As a transition to the Mishnah-form of the halakah it was necessary to commend the newly-developed code in the old Midrash-form. This accordingly was done. R. Ishmael and his school represent a closer approximation to the older form of halakic

Midrash. Finally the two forms of halakic Midrash were edited together, and this process has produced the present complete and composite Halakic Midrashim, which embody the work of the rival schools, but slightly modified in places, and harmonised, by the final editors.

It is noteworthy that in the present form of our Midrash not only is Akiba himself occasionally cited (cf. *e.g.* § 4), but also his disciples, such as R. Shimeon b. Jochai and R. Meir, as well as elder contemporaries such as Eliezer b. Hyrkanos, Joshua b. Ḥananya, Gamaliel II, Tarphon, Jose the Galilean and Eleazar b. Azariah, and also later scholars, such as Rabbi (Judah the Prince) and Shimeon b. Eleazar (a pupil of Meir).

III

Special Characteristics and Importance of the Halakic Midrash

(*a*)

The halakic Midrashim are the work of the Tannaim, *i.e.* the Rabbinical teachers who were responsible for the constitution of the halakah in its fixed form—the form which is the basis of the latter Talmudic discussions—and who lived during the first two centuries of our era. The importance of this early group is obvious, because it reflects an earlier stage in the development of the halakah than the official Mishnah.

Fortunately, we have preserved in this literature the work of two early schools, who both contributed to the consolidation of Rabbinical Judaism in the critical time that followed A.D. 70. The differences between them were, however, concerned, not so much with the actual context of the halakah—about that there was substantial agreement—but rather with logical method and statement. These differences are reflected in differences of dialectical terminology, and the greater or less employment of particular kinds of argument.

Thus Ishmael is fond of using the argument known as *kelal uperat* and *perat ukelal* ("general and particular, particular and general"), *i.e.* limitation of the general by the particular, and *vice versa*. In the scheme of rules ascribed to Ishmael (*Baraitha de R. Ishmael*), this principle has eight special applications, and is expressed in eight separate rules (see Singer, p. 13, *Baraitha de R. Ishmael*, Nos. 4–11). The first of these (*mikelal ûperat*) may be paraphrased: "A general proposition followed by an enumeration of particulars already comprehended in the general proposition (in which case, the scope of the proposition is limited by the things specified)." A good example of the application of this principle will be found in the text of § 8 of the translation that follows, on the words *A meal-offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance* (Num. v. 15), where the Midrash cites Ishmael as follows: "*R. Ishmael says: [the words] 'a meal-offering of memorial' [contain something] general (kĕlal); [the words] 'bringing iniquity to remembrance' [contain something] particular; and if something general is followed by a specification, the general contains neither more nor less than what is in the particular.*" On this reasoning the only effect of the meal-offering is to reveal guilt. "*But*" (proceeds Ishmael) "*if thou statest the case thus, would not justice appear to be perverted? For an opponent* [in discussion] *might argue and say: 'Which attribute (human and divine) is of greater importance, the attribute of good or the attribute which brings forth punishment? Thou wilt certainly say: 'the attribute of good.'*"[1] The Rabbi tacitly allows the force of this objection, and proceeds to nullify the deduction of the previous argument ("general and particular") by employing the method of *a majori ad minus or a minori ad majus* (which he constantly employs). He proceeds: "*Now if the offering brings her sins to remembrance, should it not the more bring her good deeds to remembrance?*" The Midrash then proceeds to limit the rigid application of "general and particular" in all cases as follows: *But this is a principle: every expression in Scripture which contains something general, and is followed by a specification* (*i.e.* a limiting particular), *and where justice would suffer* (if the rule of "general and particular" were rigidly kept), *both* (*statements*) (in the general and particular) *remain intact* (*i.e.* unaffected), *and* (*so*) *justice does not suffer. How do both remain intact so that justice does not suffer* (in the case of the woman suspected of adultery, and brought to the ordeal)? *If she has been defiled* [and has no merit], *then the justice of God punishes her at once; but if she has any merit, then the merit will mitigate the punishment, and it will be in suspense three months* (till the matter can be finally determined).

Akiba made much larger use of the argument from analogy than Ishmael (*Gĕzērāh shaweh*), and also of the principle of inclusion and exclusion (*ribbuy u-mi'ût*). Akiba pressed the

[1] Cf. St. Paul's argumentation in Romans ii. and iii.

special significance of superfluous words or letters, repetitions, and the use of special particles in such a way as to make them significant in deductions and applications, whilst Ishmael, on the other hand, maintained that all these features of the text were to be explained by the laws, naturally applied, that governed the usage of the language.

Another principle of interpretation which was differently applied by the two schools, is the rule numbered 13 in the *Baraitha* (Singer, p. 14). This may be rendered: "*If two passages of Scripture contradict each other, this contradiction must be reconciled by comparison with a third passage.*" [1] According to Akiba the third passage decides in favour of one of the two contradictory statements; according to Ishmael it modifies the interpretation of both.[2]

(*b*)

The special importance of this Midrashic literature, both for the study of early Rabbinical Judaism and for Early Christian literature, is considerable. It illustrates, *e.g.* the kind of argumentation which was common in Rabbinic circles in the first and second centuries A.D., and with which St. Paul was obviously familiar. Examples (cf. especially Romans ii. and iii.) have been pointed out in the notes.

The phraseology of these early Palestinian Midrashim is also important for the illustration of the New Testament books, especially the Fourth Gospel and the allied Epistles. Thus in § 1 of our Midrash a comment runs: *Beloved are the Israelites because even when they are defiled, the Shekina rests upon them.* This has been rendered: *What manner of love has God bestowed upon Israel, that even when they are defiled,* etc. With this may be compared 1 John iii. 1–2: *Behold what manner*

[1] For an example of the application of this rule, see § 58 below.

[2] For further details about these rules, and the principles of Rabbinic exegesis see Mielziner, *Introduction to the Talmud,* and the article "Talmud Hermeneutics" in *J.E.* xii. 30–33. Cf. also Strack, *Einleitung,*[5] ch. xi. (pp. 95 ff.); Bacher's *Terminologie* is the great authority.

of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God.

A large number of phrase-parallels of this kind are pointed out in the notes on the text of the translation that follows.

See also Schlatter, *Die Sprache und Heimat des vierten Evangelisten* (Gütersloh, 1902), and Burney, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford, 1922), p. 2 f. *et passim.*

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Editions of the text

An important edition of the Hebrew text has been published by the *Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the *Corpus Tannaiticum* Series, *Pars Tertia Siphre d'Be Rab* (fasc. primus : *Siphre ad Numeros* with *Siphre zuta*). The editor is H. S. Horowitz (Leipzig, 1917). An edition was also published (Vienna, 1864) by M. Friedmann. The *editio princeps* appeared in Venice in 1545.

(*b*)

Translations

The only "translation" of the text of *Sifre* to Numbers (before the present volume was published) is the Latin of Ugolini *Thesaurus*, xv.

(*c*)

Literature

Frankel, *Darke ha-Mishnah*, pp. 309 ff.
Geiger, *Urschrift*, pp. 434–450.
Hoffmann, *Zur Einleitung in die halachischen Midraschim.*
Weiss, *Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Tradition* (in Hebrew, with the title *Dôr dôr wᵉ dôrĕshav*, 5 vols.), vols. i and ii.
See, further, the literature cited in *J.E.* s.v. *Sifre* and cf. *J.E.* s.v. *Midrash Halakah.*
Other literature has been cited in the body of the preceding Introduction.

(*d*)

Short Titles and Abbreviations

Bacher, *Terminologie* = *Die exegetische Terminologie der jüdischen Traditionsliteratur* (Leipzig, 1905).
Dérenburg, *Essai* = *Essai sur l'Histoire et la Géographie de la Palestine*, par J. Dérenburg (Paris, 1867).
J.E. = *The Jewish Encyclopædia* (12 vols.).
J.Q.R. = *The Jewish Quarterly Review* (new Series).
R.W.S. = *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue* (2nd ed. 1912), by W. O. E. Oesterley and G. H. Box.

R.D.d.H. = *Die religiöse Denkweise der Ḥasidim*, by P. Levertoff, Leipzig, 1918.

Sayings = *The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers* (*Pirḳe Aboth*), translated and edited by W. O. E. Oesterley, D.D. (London, S.P.C.K. 1919).

Short Survey = *A Short Survey of the Literature of Rabbinical and Mediæval Judaism*, by W. O. E. Oesterley and G. H. Box (London, S.P.C.K. 1920).

Strack, Einleitung = *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrash*, von Hermann L. Strack (5th ed. München, 1921).

[An important article by Dr. W. M. Christie on "The Jamnian Period in Jewish History," appeared in the *Journal of Theological Studies* for July 1925.]

MIDRASH SIFRE ON NUMBERS

§ 1.

Removal of Unclean Persons from the Camp
(Num. v. 1–4)

"Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, etc., that they defile not their camps in the midst whereof I dwell."

What manner of love has God bestowed upon Israel [1] that even when they are defiled the Shekina [2] rests among them;[3] cf. also Lev. xvi. 16: "Who dwelt with them in the midst of their impurity"; also Lev. xv. 31; Num. xxxv. 34.

[1] Lit. "beloved are the Israelites." It seems to me most probable that the original phrase in 1 John iii. 1 (at least in the mind of the writer) was this genuinely Rabbinic one: "Beloved are we, etc." (cf. also Aboth, iii. 21–23, especially v. 22: "Beloved are Israel that they are called Children of God"). This would prove the Palestinian environment of the writer.

[2] The majestic Presence of God which has descended and dwelt among men. Cf. what Sirach says about Wisdom (xxiv. 8): "Let thy tabernacle be in Jerusalem, and thine inheritance in Israel."

[3] Cf. Yoma, 57*a*: A certain Sadducee (probably Christian) remarked to R. Ḥanina: "Now surely that the Temple is no more and you cannot cleanse yourselves from your ceremonial uncleanness, you are defiled, and God no longer dwells amongst you." He replied: "Come and see what is written concerning them (the Jews): who dwells with them in the midst of their impurity" (Lev. xvi. 16). This idea was specially developed in mystic circles, cf. my work *Die Religiöse Denkweise der Chassidim*, pp. 26–31. On the other hand, idolatry and pride cause the removal of the Shekina, cf. Sifre on *Deuteronomy*, 104*a*; Mek., 72*a*; Sota, 5*a*: of a proud man God says: "He and I cannot dwell in the same place." The proof from this text that God is present among Israel (= the Church) even when they are defiled, is characteristically Midrashic, for the context suggests the contrary.

R. Jose the Galilean [1] says: "Come and see the terrible effect of sin.[2] Before they (the Israelites) committed the crime (of the golden calf) [3] there was among them no person with an issue, nor any leper, but as soon as they sinned, these diseases sprang up in their midst." Incidentally we gather from this that all the three things [4] happened on the same day. R. Shimeon ben Joḥai [5] says: "Come and see the terrible effect of sin. Before they committed the crime we read concerning them: [6] 'The vision of the glory of God was like unto a burning fire' (Ex. xxiv. 17), [and yet] they feared not, nor did they tremble. But as soon as they sinned, we read: 'And Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his countenance shone and *they were afraid to come near to him*'" (*ibid.* xxxiv. 35).[7]

And the children of Israel did so; as the Lord commanded, so they did (v. 4).

The first half of this verse makes known the obedience of Israel: as Moses said to them, so they did.

The second half is not a mere repetition, but it suggests that even the defiled persons themselves did not hesitate [to leave the camp].

[1] First and second centuries. Colleague of R. Akiba; scholar, saint and miracle worker; sometimes abused because of his Galilean accent (cf. Erubin, 53).

[2] Lit. "how hard is the power of transgression."

[3] Lit. "before they stretched out their hands for the transgression."

[4] *I. e.* worshipping of the golden calf, leprosy, etc., and removal from camp. For the relation between sin and disease, cf. John v. 14, ix. 2; 1 Cor. xi. 30. See also Abrahams, *Studies in Pharis. and the Gospels*, i. 108–112, and Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, ii. 274.

[5] Middle of second century.

[6] Lit. "what does it say concerning them?"

[7] *I. e.* not only were they afraid to look at the Divine Glory, but they could not even bear to look at its reflexion in the face of Moses. Cf. 2 Cor. iii. 7–8, Heb. xii. 18–22; and 1 John iii. 21: ("If our heart condemns us not, we have boldness toward God.")

§§ 2–4.

The Law about a Man Voluntarily Confessing to the Wrongful Possession of Property (Num. v. 5–9)

§ 2.

And the Lord spake unto Moses. If any man or woman commit any sins of men in breaking faith with the Lord, and that person incur guilt (e. g. *by any wrongs referred to in Lev. v.* 21, *such as the denial of the receipt of a deposit or of the finding of lost goods*), *then they shall confess their sins which they have done: and he shall return back that which he had wrongfully in his possession in full, and add unto it the fifth part thereof and give it unto him against whom he has trespassed. But if the man* [*be dead and*] *have no kinsman to whom the property wrongfully held may be restored, the property wrongfully held which becomes the Lord's, shall be the priest's, over and above the ram of propitiation with which he* (*the priest*) *makes propitiation for him* (i. e. *the man who had confessed his error*).

What is the special purpose of this section? Because, although a law is provided (Lev. v. 20) concerning a person confessing to the wrongful possession of property, yet, nowhere in Scripture do we hear anything about [what is to be done in the case of] a person wrongfully possessing the property of a proselyte; therefore this passage supplements the above-mentioned one by making provision that he, who wrongfully possesses the property of a proselyte and has sworn [to the contrary], [the proselyte] having died, must pay the principal value of the property, together with the addition of a fifth part to the priest, and bring a guilt offering "to the altar").[1]

[1] The argument is based on the words of the supplementary law in this passage: "But if the man [be dead and] have no

This is a general principle: every Scriptural doublet contains some particular point to be emphasized and is not a mere repetition.[1]

R. Josiah [2] says: "Why does it say here, 'a man or a woman'? [3] In order to show the equality of woman

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kinsman (goel)" which can refer only to a proselyte "who is like a new-born child" (Bekoroth, *47a*) and is legally considered as having no relations, if they be pagans. Cf. Midrash R. on *Numbers*: "The proselytes are as important to God as the Israelites. No one can become a priest unless his father is a priest, nor a Levite unless he is of Levitic descent. But anyone —even a pagan—who desires to become a godly man (tsadik) can be so, as this depends not on accident of birth. On the contrary, such men come to God by their own free will, because they love Him, and therefore God loves them. Yea, God loves the proselytes exceedingly. It is like unto a king who had flocks of sheep and goats. One day a deer joined the flock, and henceforth it went out with them daily into the pasture-field and every evening returned home with them. The shepherd told this to the king. And the king loved the deer, and commanded that in the field he should be specially tended, have good pasture, and no one should dare beat him. 'Take special care of him!' And, on returning from the field in the evening, the king used to say: 'Give him to drink!' He loved him exceedingly. Said they to him: 'Lord, (mari) how many goats hast thou, how many sheep, how many lambs, and yet dost not give special command to tend them, and, concerning this deer, thou commandest us daily?' The king replied, 'that cattle instinctively (lit. willy-nilly) go out every morning to pasture in the field, and come back in the evening to sleep in the shed. But the deer sleep in the forest (in the open); it is not their way to come to live among men. Must we not appreciate the deer, who left the wide forest where all the wild animals live, and came to dwell in a fenced-in ground?' So we must appreciate the proselyte, who has left his family, and his father's house, and his people, and, in fact, all his fellows in the World—(the Gentile world), and has come to us. Therefore God specially commands Israel to take great care of him and not to cause him any harm, as it is said: 'Ye should love the stranger' (ger = proselyte)."

[1] As in the present case, where the law already mentioned in Leviticus is here renewed and supplemented by this additional stipulation.

[2] Second century. The most distinguished pupil of R. Ishmael. Cf. Introduction, and Bacher, *Ag. d. T.* ii. 351–364.

[3] *I. e.* why is woman specially mentioned?

with man in all cases where a sin-offering is required and in all laws concerning indemnity for injuries and damages. For otherwise we might deduce from (Ex. xxi. 33) 'If a *man* shall open a pit, etc.,' that in cases like these woman is not included." [1]

R. Jonathan [2] says: "It is not necessary [to deduce the equality of woman with man in connexion with the Exodus section from the word 'woman' in our passage], for it says in another place, 'the *owner* of the pit shall pay.' Also: 'the *person* that kindled the fire shall make restitution.' [3] In that case, why does it say here, 'or woman'? The words apply only to this particular case." [4]

Any sins of man. What do these words imply? That all sins against man are also sins against God. For otherwise we might infer (from the passage in Lev. v. 20–26, where particular sins against man are connected with faithlessness to the Lord), that it does not apply to *all* sins.[5]

In breaking faith. These words always mean *treachery* (lying), cf. 1 Chron. v. 25; 1 Chron. x. 13; 2 Chron. xxvi. 18; Josh. vii. 1; Num. v. 12.

[1] According to traditional law women are exempt from the performance of most periodical rites and religious duties incumbent on male Israelites. In regard to "prohibitions," however, no difference is made between the sexes. The law of equality is here derived from the analogy of "Hekesh": as in this passage woman is placed in one category with man, similarly in all such cases is she on equal footing with him.

[2] Second century. Fellow-student of R. Josiah. An important saying of his is preserved in Mekilta (Ki Tissa, cf. Yoma, 85*b*) in connexion with the question of saving human life on the Sabbath: "you may break *one* Sabbath for the sake of keeping many Sabbaths," *i.e.* to save a man's life gives that man the opportunity of keeping many more Sabbaths, in fact, gives him more years in which to acquire merit by keeping the Law.

[3] *I. e.* man or woman.

[4] But it is not a general rule for all cases in civil law.

[5] Because all wrongs done to man are also sins against God, a sacrifice must be brought after restitution. Cf. Matt. v. 23 f.

And that person (*lit. soul*) *incur guilt.* Why this phrase? Because otherwise we might conclude from the expression "man or woman" that it excludes those of doubtful or double [1] sex.

That person. All are included: men, women, and proselytes. Perchance also minors [2]? There is an *a fortiori* argument [that they are excluded]: If they are exempt [from punishment] in cases of idolatry,[3] how much more so in lighter cases! [4]

And that soul incur guilt. Why this expression? In order to teach us that he who puts fire to a neighbour's stock of grain on the Day of Atonement, whilst the court of justice cannot make him pay for the damage, yet *his soul incurs guilt, i. e.* he is punished directly by God.[5]

Then they shall confess. From the verse [Lev. v. 5] "And he should confess that he sinned," we only gather that a *sin-offering* is accompanied by *confession.* Whence do we know that also a guilt-offering [must be accompanied by confession?] Because it says here, "And that soul be *guilty,* then they shall confess." [6]

[1] ἀνδρόγυνος.

[2] A boy under thirteen, a girl under twelve years.

[3] This is deduced from Deut. xvii. 5: "Then shalt thou bring forth that *man* or that *woman* . . . and shalt stone them to death."

[4] Lit. "in regard to all the [other] commandments of the Law."

[5] The text is defective. Burning on the Day of Atonement was punished with the "Divine punishment" of *Karet,* and, according to our text, the person is not to be punished in a "double way." Cf. Lev. xvi. 29 and Mishna Keritoth. According to tradition it meant premature or sudden death. But see Gunkel, *Gen.* p. 276.

[6] That sin- and guilt-offerings must also be accompanied by *repentance* is seen from Tos. Yoma, p. 190; Keritoth, 7*a*; Shebuoth, 13*a*. Cf. Targum, Eccles. iv. 17: "Be not like the fools who bring a sacrifice for their offences, but turn not from the evil deeds which they have in their hands, and are not accepted in grace."

R. Nathan says: "This is a principle: all those who are about to die [1] must confess their sins."

§ 3.

And they should confess their sins which they have done. That is, in cases like these only the person himself must bring a guilt-offering and confess, but not his son. [For instance], if one says to another: "Give me back the deposit which I left with thy father," [and that one replies]: "Thou hast not left any deposit."—"I adjure thee!"—and that one says: "Amen," [2] and then he remembered [that the claimant was right], are we to suppose that he is obliged [to bring a guilt offering]? [No.] For it says here: "They shall confess their sin which *they* have done."

§ 4.

To the priest. That is, to one of the priests who are attached to the division of duty in the Temple.[3] Thou sayest so,[4] but perchance it may be given to any priest (whether on duty or not)? But it says, "Except the hart of the atonement by which *atonement* will be wrought for him," which can only refer to those priests who bring forth *atonement* at the time being, namely, those attached to the particular division at that time.

If he defrauded a priest (and then confessed, etc.)

[1] (Ha-methim). There is another reading—"those who are to be executed (mumathim)." In any case, the institution of Confession before death is very ancient. Cf. also James v. 16 and context.

[2] The usual formula of the acceptance of an oath. σὺ εἶπας (Matt. xvi. 24) is not to be found in Rabbinic literature as an affirmative of an oath.

[3] Cf. ἐφημερία in Luke i. 5. See also Jos., *Ant.* vii. 14. 7; *Vita* 1.

[4] One of the most frequent phrases in the Halakic Midrash. Cf. the similar direct appeal to the potential opponent in Rom. ii. 1–5, 17–25.

can the latter claim (the money)? [1] We might deduce it by a logical inference [that he could]: if he can claim what belongs to other people,[2] should he have no right to claim what originally belonged to him?

R. Nathan used to express it differently: "If a thing to which I have no right is put into my hands, once there no one dare take it away from me, the more so must it be with a thing which belonged to me by right before it actually came into my hand, that when I do get it, no one should be able to claim and take it from me!" The Sages said to him: "It is right in a case in which no others have a part, but here the other (priests) also have a part in it, and therefore it must be taken out of his hand and divided among all the priests belonging to the division." [3]

Beside the hart of the atonement by which atonement is wrought. Whence do we know that when a person has defrauded a proselyte and sworn [that he did not and then remembered that he did] and has gone to bring the money and the guilt-offering, but died in the meantime, that the heirs are not obliged [to bring the offering]? Because it says here, "By which atonement is wrought for *him*." [4]

Thus R. Akiba used to teach before he went to Ziffirin.[5] But when he returned from there, he said, "Even if he had already given the money to the priests belonging to the division and then died [before bringing the sacrifice], the heirs are not obliged [to bring the offering],

[1] Although he does not happen to belong to the division of duty at that time?

[2] *I. e.* as a priest he can claim his priestly due from him who had wrongfully possessed something belonging to somebody else and then confessed, etc.

[3] The style here is very abrupt, but this is the most probable meaning of these sentences.

[4] Which suggests that he must be alive to be atoned for.

[5] Probably the headland of Cyprus, a place often mentioned in connexion with his travels.

for it says, 'Except the hart of the atonement *by which atonement is wrought for him,*' which words suggest [that a guilt offering is only to be brought for a person] who is in need of atonement, but not for a dead person for whom his own soul has already wrought atonement.'" [1]

§§ 7–21.

The Ordeal of Jealousy (Num. v. 11–31)

§ 7.

This law of the ordeal of a woman suspected of adultery is to supplement the law about Divorce (Deut. xxiv. 1).[2] For that law deals with the case of a husband who, although he had witnesses [that his wife had committed adultery], did *not* [3] admonish her [to abstain from that intercourse]. In that case he should write her a bill of divorcement.[4] But we would not know what is to be done in a case where adultery is uncertain, therefore it says here: "When a man's wife," etc., Scripture orders her (in that case) to drink the water of bitterness.[5]

[1] The idea that Death atones is very common in traditional literature, cf. Mishna Yoma, viii. 8: "Death and the Day of Atonement bring forth atonement *with repentance*" (*i. e.* when the person repented before death or on the Day of Atonement).

[2] Lit. "why has this passage been said? Because it says, 'When a man has taken a wife and married her,'" etc.

[3] This seems to be the correct reading.

[4] Here it is taken for granted that *erwath dābār* in Deut. xxiv. means, in accordance with the interpretation of the Shammaiites (cf. Gittin, ix. 10), *unchastity* (λόγου πορνείας in Matt. v. 32).

[5] According to this, divorce was enforced even for actual *adultery*, when the witnesses did not previously admonish the woman to abstain from intercourse with the suspected party, (cf. Gittin, ix. 2; Sota, i. 1, 2; vi. 2, 3). And yet Archdeacon Charles, in his *Teaching of the New Testament on Divorce* (Williams and Norgate, 1921), dogmatically states: "The words *erwath dābār* did not mean adultery." Cf. my criticism of Charles' views on Divorce in the July number of the *Guardian*, 1921, and G. H. Box and Ch. Gore, *Divorce in the New Testament* (S.P.C.K., 1921).

If a man's wife went aside. Scripture only refers to cases where the matrimonial connexion is according to the Law.[1] This excludes the following cases: a widow who is married to a high-priest; a divorced woman, or a woman released from leviratical marriage by ḥalitsa,[2] who is married to a common priest.[3] According to Akabya ben Mahalalel, also a woman-slave that has been set free, and the wife of a proselyte [are excluded]. Said they (the Scribes) to him: "Lo, Karkemit was a freed slave in Jerusalem, and [when she was suspected by her husband of adultery], Shemayah and Abtalion [4] did administer the water to her." He replied [in the following phrase]: "They gave her a sham to drink!" [5] Thereupon they (the sages) excommunicated him (Akabya) [for insisting on contradicting the majority, and his opposition to the famous teachers]. And he died in his excommunication, and the supreme court (Bet Din) threw stones at his coffin.[6]

[1] Lit. "when she is fit for 'wifehood,'" *i. e.* when she is his lawful wife.

[2] Cf. Deut. xxv. 7–9.

[3] *I. e.* when the husbands of such women, whom they have married unlawfully, suspect them of adultery, the ordeal of testing is not to take place.

[4] The famous teachers of Hillel and Shammai (cf. P. Aboth. i. 11–13). They were supposed to have been of Gentile origin.

[5] *I. e.* they merely feigned to do so. The phrase is: "*Dogma* have they made her drink." "Dogma," which often occurs in Talmud and Midrash, may mean here "as a warning to others they made her drink." Or, they (Shem. and Abt.), being proselytes, performed the act, because she (the former Gentile) was like themselves, *i. e.*: "Blood is thicker than water," and they were prejudiced in her favour to consider her a full Jewess. In the N.T. (cf. Matt. i. 19; Col. ii. 15) δειγματίσαι, or παραδειγματίσαι has the sense of "*dare ejus rumorem*," and is influenced by LXX. As far as I know, δειγματίζω (and παραδειγματίζω), which is not found in classical Greek, means, "to put up as an example."

[6] Scholars are divided as to the period when this remarkable, but obscure, scribe lived (cf. Brill, *Mebo-ha-Mishnah*, i. 49; Dérenburg, *Essai sur l'Histoire de la Palestine*, p. 483). While

v. 13. *And it be hid from the "eyes" of her husband.* This excludes a *blind* husband [from the rite of the ordeal].

And it be "hid" from the eyes of her husband.

But not when he sees [her improper conduct] and pretends not to do so.[1] [This is the rule]: If the husband knows [that she was unfaithful], he has no right to cunningly deceive her, in order to make her drink.[2]

And she hid herself (and as a matter of fact) *defiled herself,* [which means], there were no witnesses for the defilement, although there were witnesses for the retirement. But perhaps [even, when there] were no witnesses for either? In that case she would be permitted to [live with] her husband.[3]

And she hid. Whence do we know the standard time limit?[4] From the expression "*And she hid and defiled herself,*" [which implies] that "the hiding" must be of sufficient duration to incur defilement, namely, as long a time as it takes to go round a palm tree. This is the opinion of R. Ishmael. R. Eliezer[5] says: "As long as it takes to mix [with water] a cup [of wine]."

R. Joshua[6] says: "As long as it takes to drink it." Ben Azzai[7] says: "As long as it takes to roast an egg."

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some place him in the period of Hillel (30 B.C.–A.D. 10), others bring him down to the early or even latter part of the 1st century. About his early life nothing is known.

[1] Lit. "covers it up."

[2] The ordeal is only to be resorted to in cases of uncertainty, but if the husband was certain, and pretended that he was not, the ordeal (even if it took place) will not afford a test.

[3] And no ordeal would take place.

[4] Of the retirement, as not to be a mere baseless suspicion. Lit. "but we have not heard (about) the limit of hiding. Therefore there is a teaching," etc.

[5] R. E. ben Hyrkanos, who flourished *c.* A.D. 90–130, brother-in-law of R. Gamaliel II.

[6] ben Ḥananya, *c.* A.D. 110–130.

[7] Shimeon ben Azzai, *c.* A.D. 120.

R. Akiba says: "As long as it takes to suck it." R. Jehuda Ben Bethyra [1] says: "As long as it takes to suck three eggs one after the other."

"And there be no witness against her."

Scripture means *two* witnesses.[2] Perhaps one [is sufficient to exclude her from the ordeal]? But it says (Deut. xix. 15): *"No one witness shall stand up against a man concerning any transgression and sin."* Now, the word *"one"* in this verse is really superfluous (as it is followed by *witness* in singular), but it is mentioned, in order to form a rule once and for all, that wherever it says *witness* (although the singular is used), it means *two*, unless Scripture directly says "one." [3]

v. 14. *And the spirit of jealousy came over him and he became jealous of his wife.*

[This is] optional.[4] Such is the opinion of R. Ishmael, but R. Eliezer says: "It is his duty."

§ 8.

And the man should bring his wife to the priest.

According to the [Mosaic] law the man [himself] may bring his wife to the priest, but they (the Scribes) have said: [5] "One has to assign two scholars ('Disciples of the wise') [to escort the parties] on the way, in order

[1] *C.* A.D. 90.

[2] Although the singular is used.

[3] From this again we gather the following Pharisaic laws about adultery, etc.: (1) When there were two witnesses of the actual defilement the woman was put to death (Lev. xx. 19; Deut. xxii. 22). But only when she had been warned previously, cf. above. (2) When only the hiding was witnessed by two persons, the ordeal took place, and she was not allowed for the time being to live with her husband. (3) If there was one witness of the hiding, it seems from this rule that the ordeal took place. See the beginning of this section.

[4] *I. e.* the becoming jealous!

[5] Perhaps the similar expression in the "Sermon on the Mount" has the same meaning.

that there should be no coition (and thus condone the offence)."

v. 15. *And he shall bring her offering for her; one-tenth of an ephah of barley-meal.*

Why is it [expressly] stated? For otherwise one (lit. "I") would have deduced by inference that, as "the poor man's meal-offering" is brought of fine meal, so must hers also be brought of fine meal, as both offerings are for sin (committed).[1] Said R. Gamaliel[2]: "Scribes, leave it to me, and I will interpret it symbolically": [3] "As her acts had been bestial, so her offering consisted of the food of beasts." [4]

A meal offering of memorial.

Is one to understand [the term "memorial"] as referring to both justification and condemnation? [5] [No], for it goes on to say: "*bring iniquity to remembrance,*" [from which we see] that, although elsewhere "memorial" is used in a good [sense], here [it is connected] with punishment. Thus R. Tarphon.[6]

R. Akiba says: "Here also it is [to be taken] in the good [sense], for it says (v. 28): '*And if the woman be not defiled* [then she shall be free']." [7]

[1] Barley meal was far less valuable than "fine-meal" or "wheat," cf. 2 Kings vii. 1; Rev. v. 6.

[2] Gamaliel ii., *c.* A.D. 90–110.

[3] Cf. Bacher, *Terminologie*, p. 61; *Ag. d. T.* i. 75.

[4] But see Gray, *Crit. Com. on Num.* (Intern. Cr. Com.), p. 50.

[5] *I. e.* "memorial" is elsewhere used in Scripture in a good sense; does it mean here also that the offering is a "memorial" to God in either case, whether she was found guilty or not? For the phrase, "justification and condemnation," cf. 2 Cor. iii. 9.

[6] *C.* A.D. 110. According to many scholars (Renan, *Les Evangiles*, p. 70; Zahn, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, viii. 54–56; Schürer, *G. d. jud. Volkes*, ii. 444; Bardenenver, *Geschichte der altchristl. Literatur*, i. 212), he is identical with the Trypho of Justin., *Dial. c. Tryphone*. He was a bitter enemy of Jewish Christianity.

[7] So that the offering is also a "memorial" of justification.

Bringing iniquity to remembrance.

From this we only know that [the offering] brings [her] *iniquity* to remembrance [before God]; whence do we know that (her) merit is also brought to remembrance? [1] From the general term: "*an offering of memorial.*"

R. Ishmael says: "[the words] 'a meal-offering of memorial' [contain something] general [2]; 'bringing iniquity to remembrance' [contain something] particular,[3] and if something general is followed by a specification, the general contains neither more nor less than what is in the particular." [4] But if thou sayest thus, would not justice [5] appear perverted? For the [potential] [6] opponent (in discussion) might argue and say: "which attribute (human and divine) is of greater importance ("more abundant")[7], the attribute of good or the attribute [which bringeth forth] punishment?" Thou wilt certainly say: "the attribute of good." Now, if the offering brings to remembrance her sins, should it not the more bring her good deeds to remembrance?

Nevertheless this is the principle: Every expression in Scripture which contains something general and is followed by a specification, and where justice would suffer (if we were consistently to keep the rule of "general and particular"), then both remain intact, that justice should not suffer. How do both remain intact and

[1] *I. e.* that even when she is guilty, all her good deeds, if she has any, "plead for her"?

[2] Good or bad.

[3] Only bad.

[4] Cf. Introduction. *I. e.* although the "memorial" may in good or in a bad sense refer to either Divine Grace or Divine Retribution, the following phrase makes it apply only to punishment.

[5] Here in the sense of "fair play."

[6] Cf. Rom. ii. and iii.

[7] Cf. Rom. v. 15.

justice not suffer? In this way: If she was defiled [and has no merit], then the Divine justice punishes her *at once;* but if she has some merit, then the merit will mitigate the punishment and it will be in suspense for three months, till the time when the embryo could be recognised. Thus Abba Jose ben Ḥanin.[1] But R. Eliezer ben Isaac from the South [2] says, "nine months," for it says: "And if she shall be guiltless and bring forth seed": as the seed takes nine months, so also the merit (if she has any). R. Ishmael says: "twelve months." Although there is no direct proof for it, yet there is a mnemonic allusion to it in Dan. iv. 24–26.

R. Shimeon ben Joḥai says: "No merit of any kind affects the test of the bitter waters, for if it did, you would bring innocent women into ill repute. For people would say: 'They were not innocent, only the water had failed to take effect, because of some merit of the women!'" Rabbi [3] said: "I will decide: If the woman was pure, then she would die like other people; and if she was impure, she would die 'with a swollen belly and a fallen thigh.'"

R. Shimeon ben Joḥai says: "In that case how will people know during the trial who is innocent and who is guilty? [But there must have been a different sign]: the guilty one's countenance grew pale and her eyes protruded [during the process of drinking]. On such occasions they (the officials) used to say: 'Be quick, and lead her out, in order that she should not defile the temple court (by dying there)!'"

[1] Abba Jose b. Ḥanin lived in the last decades before the destruction of the Temple.

[2] Contemporary of Jose b. Ḥanin.

[3] R. Jehuda ha-Nasi (the prince), *c.* A.D. 140–220, Redactor of the Mishna. Added by a later editor.

§ 9.

And the priest shall bring 'her' near (Num. v. 16). From this the sages have deduced the rule that one should not make two women drink at the same time.

And he shall make her stand. [This is to teach us] that he (the priest) should not make any of her men-slaves or maid-slaves stand with her, for her heart is obstinate towards them [and their presence will prevent her from confessing her guilt].

Before the Lord, i. e. at the gates of Nicanor.[1] The chief of the guards [2] used to put the [levitically] defiled persons in front of the gates of Nicanor, where the suspected women were made to drink the water of bitterness.

§ 10.

And from the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle. This passage suggests that if there was no dust there, it was brought from another place outside the sanctuary and put there, for it is *the place* which consecrates it. Isi (= Joseph) ben Akabya says: "It includes the floor of the temple in Jerusalem" ("house of permanence," in contrast to the tabernacle, which was only temporary).

Isi ben Menaḥem says: "[We can deduce it by inference]: If, in cases of levitical impurity, which are comparatively of small importance, Scripture makes the Temple equal to the Tabernacle, much more so in this case!"

[1] Νικάνωρ, who imported Corinthian bronze doors for a Temple gate. Cf. Yoma, iii. 10; Midd., ii. 3.

[2] M'aamad, the guard, consisting of the representatives of the laity in the Temple. Cf. Taan. iv. 2.

§ 11.

V. 18. *And he shall unbind the hair of the woman.* The priest stands behind her and unbinds her hair. Thus R. Ishmael. This suggests that daughters of Israel should cover their heads (cf. 1 Cor. xi. 1–10), and although there is no direct proof from Scripture for it, yet there is an allusion: "And Tamar put a *covering* [1] on her head" (2 Sam. xiii. 19). R. Judah says: "If the upper part of her body was beautiful, he did not uncover it, and if her hair was beautiful, he did not loosen it. If she was arrayed in white, he arrayed her in black; if black clothes suited her—in unbecoming clothing. If she had on golden ornaments, such as chains (catella), earrings, and finger-rings, the priest took them off from her, in order to make her look plain (or to disgrace her)." R. Joḥanan ben Beroka [2] says: "One is not allowed to disgrace a daughter of Israel more than is (distinctly) written in the Law. [But] he used to put up a sheet of linen between himself and the people, and the priest went behind her and let down her hair." The sages said to him: ["It is not so], for she did not consider the honour of God, and so one cannot consider *her* honour. It was necessary that all this humiliation should take place!" Everyone who wanted to see, could see, except her own male- and female-servants, lest she should be hardened by their presence. Men- and women-relations and strangers were allowed to see her, for it says (Ezek. xxiii. 48): "and all the women should take an example and should not do like your whoredom."

And they should put water on her hands.

Abba Ḥanin said in the name of R. Eliezer [3]: "All

[1] Apher = covering, cf. 1 Kings xx. 38. Assyr. *ipsu.*
[2] Second century. [3] El. ben Hyrkanos.

this is in order to make her tired, so that she might change her mind (and confess her sin) and be afraid to drink the water. Here we can deduce something by inference: If God so pitieth those who *disobey* His will, how much more those who *do* it!" [1]

And the priest shall have the water of bitterness, the curse-bringing water in his hand. This suggests that the water turned bitter in the hand of the priest. Another explanation: the water is called "bitter" because of its effect, in case she was found guilty, when it will make the body sick and lay the sin bare.

§ 12.

Vv. 19–22. *And the priest should administer an oath to her.* The *priest* should recite the oath, not she herself. For otherwise we might have deduced by inference [that she *should* recite it herself]: Here the word "*oath*" is used, and in another passage [2] the same word "*oath*" is used; as there she recited it herself, so also in this case.

And he shall say to the woman, [that is], in any language which she understands. Thus R. Josiah. By inference we might have deduced that it must be only in the holy tongue; for, if the law concerning the deceased brother's widow, [which, in comparison with a sotah,[3]] is a light matter, only the holy tongue must be used,[4] how much more so must it be the case with the sotah! R. Ishmael says: "No [special Scripture suggestion for this is] necessary, as it is already

[1] *I. e.* God's pity and consideration for the woman who is a sinner consist in doing everything possible to make her confess, so that she should not have to drink the water.

[2] In connexion with a woman's rash utterance of a vow, Num. xxx. 4–17.

[3] Woman suspected of adultery.

[4] Cf. Deut. xxv. 7–11.

said that the woman must say 'Amen, Amen,' which implies that she understood what the priest said to her [1] (so that it is quite clear that the priest should recite the oath in any language which she understands)." Perhaps she only said the Amen, Amen, after the curse? . . . (Text corrupt). The words: "And he shall say to the woman" suggest that the priest was to teach her the formula (the order) of the oath.

If another man has not lain with thee, etc. This suggests that the priest begins by pleading tenderly (lit. "he opened with good"). He says to her: "Excessive indulgence in wine or in pleasure (lit. "laughter"), extreme youth, all these may severally have done it (led thee to sin); many have done that before thee and have been carried away [into unfaithfulness towards their husbands, confess], and do not cause the great Name (of the Lord) which is written in holiness to be blotted out in the water." He addresses a religious exhortation to her (*dibre aggada*) of things that happened in olden times (lit. "in the first writings"), for instance (Job xv. 18): "*which the wise men proclaimed and did not hide from their fathers,*" and tells her things which neither she nor her father's house (her nearest relations) were worthy to hear (viz. instances of forgiveness which followed confession and repentance). R. Ishmael says: "At first he tells her the power of the bitter water; he says to her: 'My daughter, I tell thee, this water is like some dry medicinal substance applied to a healthy part of the body, which has no effect, but if the body be diseased, the substance dissolves and penetrates it; so it is also with thee: if thou art pure, drink and refuse not, if thou art defiled, drink not of this bitter water!'"

[1] Lit. "if she does not understand, how can she say 'Amen, Amen'?"

§ 15.

When the Lord maketh thy thigh fall, etc. (v. 21).

R. Jose the Galilean says: "This refers to the adulterer.[1] Thou sayest! Perhaps it refers only to the adulteress? This has already been stated. Scripture suggests here that as the divine punishment falls upon her, so also upon him. Here we have an inference by deduction: If in the attribute of the divine retribution (which is not abundant), we find that he who *causes* another to stumble is punished in equal measure to him who stumbleth, still more so is it with the attribute of good (which is more abundant), [namely, that he who turns another to righteousness will be rewarded like the doer of righteousness himself]" (cf. Matt. xviii. 7).

And the woman shall say "Amen, Amen." [Why twice "Amen"[2]?—"*Amen:* [may the curse come on me] if I am defiled; *Amen*, etc., if I should defile myself." (This is to make it clear that future infidelity will also be affected by the bitter waters.) Thus R. Meir.[3] But the sages do not agree with him[4] (*i. e.* they do not think it affects the future). But how do they explain the double "Amen"? Amen, I did not defile myself, but if I did, may the curse come upon me; Amen, if I have committed adultery with *this* man; Amen, if with another man. Amen, if I sinned when I was betrothed[5]; Amen, if I sinned when I was married; Amen, if I sinned when I was a widow waiting for my

[1] *I. e.* that he is also punished in the same way as she.
[2] A single "Amen" is the response to a curse (Deut. xxvii. 15 ff.).
[3] *C.* A.D. 130–160.
[4] Lit. "they do not confess the word."
[5] The betrothal is the preliminary act of marriage, and it carries with it most of the legal consequences of the same.

brother-in-law to marry me or reject me [1]; Amen, if I sinned when I was married to my brother-in-law." This is the rule: The priest mentions in the formula all cases of impurity by which she could make herself unlawful to her husband.

There are certain oaths mentioned in the torah without an accompanying curse and this one has it, so we can deduce from this that *all* the oaths must have the same formula. Again, as here the Tetragrammaton [2] must be uttered in the oath, so every oath mentioned in the torah must contain the Name. Again, there are oaths in the torah where the response "Amen" is not mentioned; in this oath the response "Amen" *is* mentioned, therefore we infer that every oath in the torah should be responded to by "Amen."

§ 16.

And the priest shall write all the cursings (v. 23). It might be inferred [from this] that all the cursings mentioned in the torah [must be written down on this occasion], therefore it says: *these* (*i. e.* only those which are mentioned in the context).

The Priest. Why is it emphasised? For one might infer that anybody could write it, since we read here: "*And he shall write,*" and we read there (in connexion with the bill of divorcement): "*and he shall write,*" so one might say: "As there it (the divorce bill) might be written by anybody, so also here." Therefore it specifies "*the priest.*"

In a book, and he shall blot them out. That means that he should write it on material from which the words could be blotted out. From this they (the sages) have deduced the following rule: The curses may not be

[1] If her husband died without issue.
[2] See p. 29, Note 3.

written on a tablet, nor on a loose sheet, nor on a skin (prepared for writing), *but on a roll*, because it says, "*in a book*." Neither must it be written with gummed ink nor with vitriol, but with ink, for it says: "*And he shall blot them out into the water of bitterness*," which means: a writing which can be blotted out. From this we can deduce something by inference: If, in order to make peace between husband and wife, God says that a book that was written in holiness [1] should be blotted out in water, how much more should the books of the *Minim* (probably referring to the Gospels), which stir up hatred and jealousy and slandering, be blotted out from the world! (although the Tetragrammaton is mentioned in them). R. Ishmael says: "How is one to act in connexion with the books of the Minim? [2] One cuts out the divine name (the Tetragrammaton) [3] occurring in them, and burns the rest." R. Akiba says: "One must burn the whole, because it (the name of God) had not been written in holiness (*i. e.* with a good purpose)."

§ 17.

And he shall make the woman drink (v. 27). Why this repetition, it has already been said: *and afterwards he shall make the woman drink?* [It is to emphasise] that if the roll had been put into the water and then the woman said: "I don't want to drink!" one has to compel her to do so. Thus R. Akiba, "But the sages say: Why the repetition: '*And afterwards he shall make*,' etc., it having already been said?

[1] *I. e.* where the Name of God was written.

[2] *I. e.* what is to be done with them, if one happens to get hold of them?

[3] This shows that in the time of R. Ishmael and R. Akiba (beginning of second century) there were Christian books (Gospels?) written either in Hebrew or Aramaic, for if they were in any other language no problem would present itself to the Rabbis.

To suggest the following: There are three things which invalidate the ordeal in connexion with the sotah: [If she changed her mind] (*a*) before the roll had been blotted out in the water; (*b*) before the meal-offering was sacrificed; (*c*) before she accepted the oath. When, after the roll had been blotted out, she says, 'I have defiled myself,' then the water must be poured out, and the offering scattered into the place where the ashes of sacrifice were deposited.

The roll [newly written for one] should not be used for another suspected woman." R. Aḥay ben R. Josiah, however, says: "It may be used for another woman."

And the priest shall wave the meal-offering before the Lord.

Before the Lord, [*i. e.*] in the east. For wherever it says "*before the Lord,*" it means *in the east,* unless Scripture directly says [to the contrary].

§ 18.

And afterwards he shall make the woman drink the water and when he has made her drink the water then it shall come to pass that if she be defiled and have committed a trespass against her husband that the water that causes the curse shall enter into her and become bitter and her belly shall swell and her thigh shall fall (vv. 26, 27).

Whence do we know that her whole body will be affected? Because it says: "*And they shall enter into her.*" Why then does it say that "her *belly* shall swell and her *thigh* shall fall away"? The member that began the sin shall first receive the punishment. (This is based on the general principle—"*with what measure a man metes, it is measured to him.*") From this can be deduced something by inference: If, in connexion with the attribute of divine retribution, which is not abundant, the member that begins the sin, first receives the punish-

ment, how much more with the attribute of good, which is the more abundant? Cf. Gen. vii. 23; xix. 11; Ex. xiv. 4; Deut. xiii. 16.

And the woman shall be a curse among the people, i. e. that people wishing to curse anyone will say: "May it happen to thee as it happened to so and so." Similarly, it says (Isa. lxv. 15): "*And ye will leave your name for an oath to my chosen.*" From this passage we see that sinners (wicked) are made use of by the righteous in their oaths. Where do we find that the righteous, on the other hand, are made use of by the wicked in (invoking) blessings? For it says (Jer. iv. 2): "*And the Gentiles will bless themselves in him, and in him they will glorify themselves*" (the Gentiles = the wicked!) Again it says: "*And all the families of the earth will bless themselves in thee and thy seed*" (Gen. xii. 3). Again it says: "And he blessed them on that day, saying, *In thee will Israel be blessed*" (Gen. xlviii. 20).

§ 19.

If the woman be not defiled but be clean (Num. v. 28): R. Ishmael says: "Would Scripture proclaim her clean if she were defiled?" [1] The words imply that as soon as an evil report has been spread about a woman, she is prohibited from living with her husband (until she was tested and found innocent. Some words are missing, cf. p. Sota, 19*a*). R. Shimeon ben Joḥai says: "It should not enter into thy mind that the merit depends on the bitter water. It says (Lev. xx. 10): '*If a man commit adultery with another man's wife,* [she should be punished by death],' from which passage we only

[1] *I. e.* the words are taken to mean: "If she be not defiled then she is clean," namely, she may live with her husband, and the question is: Why state this? As if we did not know that only when she is innocent she may live with her husband.

know that if there were witnesses who warned her [and yet she committed adultery], that she should be put to death, and if there were witnesses, but they did not warn her, she is not to be punished by death. But might one suppose that in the latter case, because she is free from the punishment of death, she should be allowed to live with her husband? One can deduce [the prohibition] by inference: If in a case of uncertainty (as described in this section) she is not allowed to live with her husband [for the time being], the more must it be so when it is certain (although the witnesses did not warn her)! She is included in the law contained in Deut. xxiv."

And if the woman is not defiled but be clean. She is considered "clean" [from now] to her husband;[1] "clean" to the man of whom she was suspected;[2] and "clean" in relation to the *peah* (*i.e.* if she was a priest's wife, she may again eat the food assigned to the priests and their families).

And shall conceive seed. [Which means]: If she was barren before, she will now be visited; thus R. Akiba. Said R. Ishmael: "If that be so, all the barren women would give their husbands cause to suspect them, in order that they might have children (since they will certainly be proved innocent in the trial), and those who eschew this expedient must be content to remain barren! But why does it say: '*And she will be free and shall conceive seed*'? [It means]: if she used to have great pains in childbirth before, she will now be free from them; if she had girls before, she will have boys now; if she had diminutive children before, she will have bigger now; if they were dark before, they will be fair now; if they were short, they will be tall."

[1] She is allowed to live with him.
[2] In case she wants to marry him when the husband dies.

§ 20.

This is the law of jealousy (v. 29). This supplementary phrase is to make the ordeal a permanent law; thus R. Josiah. But R. Jonathan says: "This phrase only summarises the preceding."

Under her husband. This is to exclude a betrothed woman.[1] Perhaps also a woman who is about to marry her deceased husband's brother is excluded? It says: "*Every man when his 'wife' has gone aside,*" etc.;[2] thus R. Josiah. R. Jonathan says: "Just these words exclude her.[3] Do they include the betrothed?" [No], for it says, "*under her husband.*"

§ 21.

Then shall he set the woman before the Lord, etc., and the priest shall execute upon her all the law and the man shall be free from iniquity (v. 30). If he did that, then he is free from guilt; but if he did not do that, he is not free from guilt.

Then the man will be free from iniquity [but the woman shall bear her iniquity]. He should not say to himself: "Woe unto me, that have killed a daughter of Israel! Woe unto me, that have disgraced a daughter of Israel! Woe unto me that have had intercourse with a defiled one!"

Shimeon ben Azzai[4] says: "These words ('the woman shall bear her iniquity') refer to a woman who was found innocent [and Scripture suggests the following]: because she brought herself to this

[1] Although she is otherwise considered as almost equal to a married woman, the law of the ordeal does not apply to her.
[2] *I.e.* the Yebamah is included in the term "wife."
[3] As she is not actually his "wife" as yet.
[4] *C.* A.D. 120.

ordeal,[1] she should not be entirely free from punishment: '*and the man shall be free from iniquity but the woman shall bear her iniquity.*'" R. Akiba says: ["It refers to a *guilty* woman, and the words suggest] that only 'when the man was free from iniquity' the woman will 'bear her iniquity'[2]; as it is said (Hos. iv. 14): '*I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom . . . for they themselves go apart with bad women and bring offerings with the prostitutes.*'" The Prophet said to them: "Because ye yourselves ran after whoredom, the water will not test your wives!"

§ 22.

The Nazarite Vow (Num. vi. 1 ff.)

To separate himself unto the Lord. It is a good thing to separate oneself unto the Lord! Shimeon the Righteous[3] said: "I have never eaten the guilt-offering of a Nazarite in my life (*i. e.* he did not favour this type of piety, being opposed to asceticism), with the exception of one case, namely, when one came to see me from the south, with beautiful eyes, stately mien and curling hair (*i. e.* he came to him at the expiration of his Nazarite vow)—I said to him: 'Why didst thou choose to have thy beautiful hair destroyed?' He

[1] Being light-minded and making her husband suspect her.

[2] *I. e.* the test of the water will only apply when the husband himself is a moral person. If he is not, no penalty will befall the woman. Cf. John viii. 7 ("Who among you is without sin shall cast the first stone").

[3] The high-priest Simeon, called ὁ δίκαιος also in Josephus (*Ant.* xii. 2, 5 and 43). It is not certain whether Simon I (beginning of third century B.C.) or Simon II (end of third century B.C.) is meant. According to Josephus, it must be the first one. But as Sirah (1) praises a high-priest Simon for his piety, etc., in a manner which shows that the writer himself knew the circumstances of the time, which are more applicable to Simon II, it is more probable that it refers to him. Cf. also *P. Aboth*, 1, 2.

replied: 'I was a shepherd in my place and I went to draw water from the fountain, and I saw my reflexion in the water and my heart was proud and incited me to sin' (lit. 'wanted to cut me out of the world, *i. e.* to die a spiritual death'). I said to him (his reflexion): 'Thou wicked one! Thou pridest thyself with what is not thine, thou art made of dust and worms, I will cut thee off for God's sake!' At once I embraced the shepherd, and kissed him on his head, and said to him: 'May there be many in Israel like unto thee, doing the will of God!' And concerning thee, the words have truly been said: *A man or a woman shall make a special vow, the vow of a Nazarite* (in such cases the Nazarite vow is a good deed)."

§§ 39–43.

The Aaronitic Blessing (Num. vi. 22–27)

§ 39.

Thus ye shall bless the children of Israel. [That is,] in the holy tongue (Hebrew). Wherever the expressions "*to reply*," "*to say*," "*thus*," occur in Scripture, they always imply that the words following are in the holy tongue.[1]

Thus ye shall bless the children of Israel.—Standing. Thou sayest, *standing*, but perhaps in any attitude? (either standing or not standing). It can be deduced from Deut. xxvii. 12: "And these shall *stand* to *bless* the people." As there the "blessing" had to be performed standing, so also in this case.[2]

R. Nathan says: "It is not necessary [to refer to that passage], for it says: 'And the priests, the sons of Levi

[1] *I. e.* these words suggest that the *ipsissima verba* are to be used.

[2] Lit. "It says here 'blessing' and it says there 'blessing,' as the 'blessing' mentioned there was standing, so the 'blessing' here [must be performed] standing."

shall draw near, for the Lord has chosen them to *serve* Him and to *bless* the name of the Lord'" (Deut. xxi. 5).

The [priestly] *blessing* is thus compared to the [priestly] *service:* As the service was to be performed standing, so also the blessing.

Thus ye shall bless the children of Israel. [The blessing must be said by the priest] with uplifted hands. Thou sayest so, but perhaps either way?[1] It says expressly: "*And Aaron lifted up his hands towards the people and blessed them*" (Lev. ix. 22). As *Aaron* [blessed the people] with uplifted hands, so must also his *sons* (descendants). R. Jonathan says: "Perhaps [we might infer from that passage] that, as there [it was performed at] the new moon and [in connexion with] the congregational sacrifice, [and by] the high priest, so also here, [that the priestly blessing must take place only on] the new moon and during congregational sacrifice and [performed only] by the *high* priest?" But it says: "For *him* (the tribe of Levi) the Lord thy God has chosen out of all thy tribes [*all the days.*]"[2] (Deut. xviii. 5).

Thus ye shall bless the children of Israel. With the distinguished name (Tetragrammaton).[3] Thou sayest, with the distinguished name, but perhaps also with a substitute (*e.g.* Adonai)? But it says: "And they shall put *My name*[4] on the children of Israel."

In the *Temple* the sacred Name had to be pronounced (in the priestly blessing), but in the country (outside Jerusalem) only a substitute.

[1] Lit. "with uplifting of hands and without uplifting of hands." Cf. Luke xxiv. 50; 1 Tim. ii. 8; Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vii. 7; Tert. *Apol.* 30; *De orat.* 11.

[2] So that every priest can perform the blessing and *at all times.* The text is defective.

[3] Shem ha-mephorash—the Name which is marked off by a special sanctity from the other Divine names.

[4] *I.e.* expressing My essence.

Thus R. Josiah. R. Jonathan says: "Lo, it says: 'In every place where I shall mention my name I shall come to bless thee' (Ex. xx. 24). This verse must be interpreted by transposition: [1] 'Wherever I shall come to bless thee, there I will allow my name (viz. the Tetragrammaton) to be pronounced. And where shall I reveal myself to thee?—In the "chosen house." [2] So thou likewise shouldst not mention My name except in the Chosen House.' From this they (the sages) have deduced the rule that the sacred Name is prohibited to be pronounced outside Jerusalem."

Thus ye shall bless the children of Israel: Here it says that the *children of Israel* only should be blessed.[3] Whence [do we know] that proselytes, women, and slaves [4] are also included?—Because it repeats: "and I will bless them." [5] Whence [do we know] that the priests are included [in the blessing]?—Because it says "and I will bless *them*" (i. e. *all*).[6]

Thus ye shall bless the children of Israel.—Facing them (lit. "face against face"). Thou sayest, "facing them," but perhaps it should be with back turned to them? But it says, "*Say* to them" [which can only mean] face to face.

Thus ye shall bless the children of Israel.—So that the whole congregation should hear. But perhaps it matters not? [7] It says, "*Say* unto them."

[1] Lit. "it is an upside down verse." R. Jonathan proves the above rule from *this* verse. He found "*askir*" difficult, so turned the verse about.

[2] "The house of choice," often used for the Temple.

[3] Lit. "I have only a blessing to Israel," etc. Bne = sons.

[4] Gentile slaves of Jews, who have consequently become members of the Jewish household.

[5] Which phrase includes all.

[6] Which means, that the priests themselves, who are the mediums of the blessing, are included in it.

[7] Lit. "perhaps among themselves," *i.e.* quietly.

Whence do we know that the sexton [1] has to say to the priest (at the appointed time): "Pronounce the blessing"? Because it says, "Say unto them." ▪

§ 40.

The Lord bless thee. Bless thee with the blessing mentioned in the torah: ("Blessed art thou in the town and blessed art thou in the field," etc. Deut. xxviii. 3).

The Lord bless thee (etc.). *Bless* thee in possessions and *keep* thee in possessions. R. Nathan said: "'*the Lord bless thee*' in possessions *and keep thee* in body (in health).'" R. Isaac says: "*And keep thee* from the evil nature." Cf. Prov. iii. 26.[3]

And keep thee, so that others may not rule over thee. Cf. Ps. cxxi. 8.

And keep thee, from demons (lit. "injurious ones"). Cf. Ps. xci. 11.[4]

And keep thee. Keep to thee the covenant of thy fathers. Cf. Deut. xxx. 12.

And keep thee. Keep thee from troubles which are to precede the Messianic times.[5] Cf. (Isa. xxi. 12):

[1] The Ḥazan = ὑπηρέτης in Luke iv. 17. That there were Ḥazanim not only in the Synagogue, but also in the Temple, can be seen from Sukka, 4, 7; Tamid, 5, 3.

▪ Interpreted in the sense that it refers to the priests having to be asked to give the blessing.

[3] Yetzer ha-r'a = sin ("the evil impulse").

[4] This quotation is interesting, as some modern O.T. scholars interpret Ps. xci. similarly.

[5] Lit. "He will keep thee [from] the *end*." This is a technical apocalyptic term since Daniel (xii. 4) based on the O.T. aharith ha-yamim. Cf. *fine aevorum* in Bar. 10, 3; συντέλεια πλήρωσις, consummation, § 30, 3*a*, and often. The time immediately preceding the coming of the Messiah is often described as a period of general tribulation, which period is called ḥeble ham-mashiah—the birth-pangs of the Messiah. Cf. also Matt. xxiv. 6; Mark xiii. 2.

"*Watchman*, what of the *night*"? (interpreted eschatologically). Another interpretation:—*And keep thee.* Keep thy soul in the hour of death. Cf. 1 Sam. xxv. 29.

Might one think that this verse (in 1 Sam.) refers to both, the righteous *and* the wicked? But it goes on to say: "and the souls of thine enemies, them shall He sling out," etc.

And keep thee. Keep thy feet from Gehenna.

And keep thee. In the world to come. Cf. (Isa. xl. 31): "And those who wait for the Lord will renew their strength," etc. (interpreted eschatologically).

The Lord make his face to shine upon thee. May He give thee "the light of countenance" (*i. e.* may thy face shine through being in the presence of God). R. Nathan said: "[It means] 'the light of the shekina' (which will come in the Messianic age), as it says (Isa. lx. 1): 'Arise, shine, for thy light has come, etc. For behold, darkness covereth the earth, etc.' Cf. Ps. lxvii. 2; cxviii. 27."

Another interpretation: It refers to the light of the Torah, as it says (Prov. vi. 23): "The Torah is a light."

And be gracious unto thee. May He be gracious unto thee [by granting] thy petitions [without thy desert]. Cf. Ex. xxxiii. 19.

Another interpretation: May He give thee favour in the sight of people.[1] Cf. Gen. xxxix. 21; Esther ii. 15; Dan. i. 9; Prov. iii. 4.

Another interpretation: *Be gracious unto thee.* In knowledge, understanding, apprehension, instruction, and in wisdom.

[1] Berioth, τὰς κτίσεις. (Mark xvi. 15.) Cf. *P. Aboth*, iii. 15: "With whomsoever the spirit of man is pleased, the spirit of God is pleased," etc.

Another interpretation: "*Gracious*" in the study of the law. Cf. Prov. iv. 9, i. 9.

Another interpretation: "*Gracious*" in giving thee undeserved gifts. Cf. Ps. cxxiii. 2, 3; Isa. xxxiii. 2.[1]

§ 42.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee (v. 26). At the time when thou standest at prayer; as it is said (Gen. xix. 21): "And he (the angel; here identified with Yahweh) said unto him (Lot): See, I have '*accepted thy face.*'[2] If I have *favoured* Lot because of Abraham my beloved, shall I not *favour* thee (Israel), for thine own sake and for the sake of thy fathers?'" That is the meaning of: "The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee."

Here it says: "*The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee*" (he will show thee favour) and in another passage it says (Deut. x. 17): "*Yahweh does not show favour.*"[3] How should these two verses be reconciled? When Israel does the will of God then "Yahweh shows him favour," but when Israel does not do the will of God, then "He shows him no favour."[4]

[1] This comes very near the N.T. idea of χάρις, although the word, in its religious significance, is a Pauline creation: Cf. Wetter, "*Charis*, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des ältesten Christentums," Leipzig, 1913.

[2] The two different shades of meaning of *nassa panim el*, "to lift up one's countenance upon" as a sign of favour, and "to grant a request," are here identified.

[3] In both passages *nassa panim* is used.

[4] According to R. Ha-shanah, 17*b*, it was the Roman lady Valeria, a Proselyte, who found a contradiction between these two passages, and, as it would not have been easy to make her understand the different shades of meaning of *nassa panim*, the Rabbi explained it to her in this way. Cf. also for the expression, Luke xx. 21 (λαμβάνειν πρόσωπόν τινος for which Mark (xii. 44) and Matt. (xxii. 16) have βλέπειν εἰς πρόσωπόν τινος) and the nouns προσωπολημψία (Rom. ii. 11), and προσωπολήπτης (Acts x. 34).

Another explanation: Before the [divine] decree has been sealed [for retribution], *Yahweh will favour* (*i. e.* there is still time for God to change), but after the divine decree has been sealed, "*He will not show any favour*" (*i. e.* there is a time of grace as well as a time when it is too late for God Himself to show mercy).

In one passage it says (Ps. lxv. 3): "O thou that *hearest prayer*, unto thee shall all flesh come"; and in another it says (Lam. iii. 44): "Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that *our prayer should not pass through*." How should these two passages be reconciled? Before the divine decree has been sealed, "*He heareth prayer*," but after the divine decree has been sealed, *He* "*covereth himself with a cloud*."

In one passage it says (Ps. cxlv. 18): "*The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him*," and in another (Ps. x. 1): "*Why, Lord, standeth thou afar off?*"

In one passage it says: "*Out of the mouth of the highest come not evil and good*" (Lam. iii. 38), and in another (Dan. ix. 14): "*Therefore hath the Lord watched upon evil*." In one verse it says (Jer. iv. 14): "*Wash thy heart from evil, O Jerusalem, that thou mayest be saved*," and in another (Jer. ii. 22): "*For though thou wash thee with water, yet thine iniquity is marked before me*." In one passage it says (*ibid.* iii. 22): "*Return, ye backsliding children;*" and in another (*ibid.* viii. 4): "*Will he return? He will not return.*"[1] One passage says: "*For I do not desire the death of him that dieth*" (Ezek. xviii. 32), and another: "For Yahweh *desired to kill* them" (1 Sam. ii. 25); in one: "The Lord will *lift up his countenance upon thee;*" and in another: "*Who does not show favour.*" (*v. supra*).

[1] The words really mean: does anyone turn away and [never] return? Why does then Israel not return? Cf. the beautiful rendering of LXX: μὴ ὁ πίπτων οὐκ ἀνίσταται, ἢ ὁ ἀποστρέφων οὐκ ἀναστρέφει. Here it is interpreted in the affirmative sense, as if God does not desire them to return to Him.

How are these contradictory passages to be explained? Thus: "*Yahweh will lift up his countenance upon thee*" refers to *this* world (*i. e.* in this world God may show favour); "*He will not show favour*" refers to the world to come (*i. e.* when the time of grace has passed).[1]

Another interpretation: "*The Lord will lift up his countenance upon thee*": He will remove his anger from thee (*i. e.* in the literal sense: he will lift up his ["angry] face."

And give thee peace. Peace at thy coming in and *peace* at thy going out. Peace with all men. R. Ḥananya, the segan [2] of the priests, says: "'*And give thee peace*'; *i.e.* in thine own house." R. Nathan says: "This refers to the peace of the kingdom of the house of David (the Messianic kingdom), as it is said (Isa. ix. 6): 'Of the increase of his government and *peace* there shall be no end.'" [3]

Another interpretation: *And give thee peace*; the peace [which comes from the study] of the torah, as it is said: "The Lord gives *strength* to his people, the Lord blesses his people with *peace*" (Ps. xxix. 11) (Strength is interpreted in traditional lore to mean the torah; cf. Mek. on Ex. xviii. 1).

Great is peace! For the sake of peace [the angel who reported to Abraham] the words of Sarah, altered the saying from "*my lord* is old" to "*I* am old" [4] (Gen. xviii. 13). Great is peace! The Holy One made

[1] Cf. the story of Dives and Lazarus, Luke xvi. 19–31.

[2] About A.D. 70. A priestly scribe, often mentioned as an eye-witness of details in connexion with the Temple-service. Segan = στρατηγὸς τοῦ ἱεροῦ in N. T. (cf. Acts iv. 1) and in Josephus (cf. *Ant.* xx. 9, 3), and see Schürer, *Geschichte d. j. v.*, 4th ed., vol. ii, p. 434.

[3] The Aaronitic blessing is interpreted eschatologically.

[4] Lit. "for he changed the act of Sarah, as it is said: And I am old," i. e. *God* himself has changed the words of Sarah, for the sake of peace, for she really said that *Abraham* was old (Gen. xviii. 12), which might have offended him! Cf. *Yebamoth* 65*b*; p. Pea 16*a*.

a change for peace' sake.[1] Great is peace, for the angel made a change for peace' sake.[2] Great is peace, for the Name of God which was written in holiness is blotted out in the water (of the ordeal of jealousy), for peace' sake, to bring peace [3] between husband and wife (*v. supra*).

R. El'azar [4] says: "Great is peace, for the prophets have implanted it (for that was the great message of the prophets) above all things in the mouth of humanity." [5]

R. Shimeon ben Ḥalafta (probably end of second century) says: "Great is peace, for it is the greatest channel of blessing,[6] as it is said (Ps. xxix. 11): 'The Lord gives strength to his people, the Lord *blesses his people with peace.*'"

R. El'azar Ha-kapar [7] says: "Great is peace, for it is the seal (the conclusion) of all blessings, as it says: '*The Lord bless thee* and keep thee, etc., and *give thee peace.*'" R. El'azar, his son,[8] says: "Great is peace, so that even when Israel is idolatrous but there is peace among them, God, as it were, says that Satan should not [have power to] touch them; as it is said (Hos. iv. 17): 'Ephraim is *bound up with images, let him alone*' (interpreted: '*do not molest him*'). But what do we read concerning them when they were divided among themselves? 'their *heart is divided, now they will be punished.*'[9] Lo, great is peace and hateful is division!"

[1] This probably refers to 1 Sam. xv. 1–2. Cf. *Yebamoth* 65*b*.
[2] Cf. Judges xiii. 3.
[3] Le-haṭil, lit. "to throw." Cf. Matt. x. 34; *βαλεῖν εἰρήνην*.
[4] El'azar ben Shammua, middle of second century.
[5] It either means that peace was the great theme of all prophets, or that the daily greeting of "Shalom" is ascribed to them.
[6] Lit. "no vessel but peace can hold blessing."
[7] About the end of the second century.
[8] Usually called R. El'azar Ha-kappar (or bar Kappar) Barabi.
[9] Unity of resolution, even in idolatry, is preferable to disunion. Does not this estimation of unity among Israel help us

Great is peace, so that even during war the heart longs for peace, as it is said, Deut. xx. 10: "When thou comest near to a city *to war against it and callest it to peace*" (*i. e.* the first act of war is a demand for peace); cf. Deut. ii. 26; Judges xi. 12.

Great is peace, for even the dead need it, as it is said: "And thou wilt come *to thy fathers in peace*" (Gen. xv. 15). Again it says: "*In peace thou shalt die*" (Jer. xxxiv. 5). Great is peace, for it is given [as a gift] to those who repent (lit. "who do repentance"), as it is said (Isa. lvii. 19): "*Peace, peace, to them that are afar off and to them that are nigh.*" [1] Great is peace, for it is the reward of the righteous, as it is said (Isa. lvii. 2): "*He* (*the righteous*) *cometh unto peace*, they (the righteous) rest on their beds."

Great is peace, for the wicked are deprived of it, as it is said: "*There is no peace for the wicked*, saith my God" (Isa. lvii. 21) (*i. e.* the fact that peace is mentioned as something that the wicked lack proves the blessedness of those who have it).

Great is peace, for it is given [as a gift] to those who *love* the torah, as it is said: "*Great peace is there to*

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to understand better St. Paul's admonitions to the Corinthians? (cf. 1 Cor. i. 10 ff.; xii. 12 ff.). Cf. Seder. *El. R.*, p. 56, where Israel is compared to a company sailing in a ship, of whom one took a drill and began to bore a hole under his seat. When the friends protested, he said: "What does it concern you? Is not this the place assigned to me?" They answered: "But will not the water come up through this hole and flood the whole vessel?"

[1] "Those that are afar off" are sinners that repent; cf. Berakot, 34*b*. R. Abahu said: "The place which the penitent occupy, the perfectly righteous are unable to occupy," as it is said: *Peace, peace, to them that are afar off and to them that are near*—"to them that are afar off" come first, and then to "them that are near." R. Johanan interprets it the other way about.

To St. Paul (see Eph. ii. 7), the "near ones" = Israel; the "far off" = Gentiles.

those who love thy torah" (Ps. cxix. 165). Great is peace, for it is given as a gift to those who *study* the torah, as it is said, "And all thy children will be *taught* by the Lord and great is the *peace* of thy children" (Isa. liv. 13).[1] Great is peace, for it is given as a gift to the meek ones,[2] as it is said (Ps. xxxvii. 11): "*And the meek* shall possess the land and *shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*" Great is peace, for it is given as a gift to those who do righteousness,[3] as it is said (Isa. xxxii. 17): "*And the work of righteousness will be peace.*"

Great is peace, for the Name of the Holy One is Peace, as it is said (Jud. vi. 24): "*And he called him Yahweh Shalom*" (The Lord is peace). R. Ḥananya, the segan of the priests, said: "Great is peace, for it is equal in importance to the whole work of Creation; as it is said, '*who formeth light and createth darkness, and maketh peace*'" (Isa. xlv. 7). Great is peace, for even the dwellers in the highest heavens[4] (the angels) need it, as it is said (Job xxv. 2): "He makes peace in His heights." Now, if in the realm where there is no (natural) enmity or strife, no hatred or dissension, peace is considered to be the highest good, the more so (in this world) where all these forces operate.[5]

One passage says: "*He makes peace in His heights*,"

[1] Cf. John vi. 45; vii. 15–16. Here "to be taught by the Lord" = to study the torah; there = to be in close, immediate touch with the Father.

[2] Anawim; cf. Luke v. 20; Matt. iii. 5: πτωχοί, or πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι.

[3] Assa tzedaka = to give alms; cf. Matt. v. 1: ποιεῖν ἐλεημοσύνην.

[4] Friedman's text has sh'hare elyonim zerikim, "for behold, the highest ones (the angels) need," etc. Our edition has: *shedare*, etc., "for the dwellers of the highest," that is, ἐν ὑψίστοις (Luke ii. 14). Cf. 2 Cor. xii. 2: ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ.

[5] Cf. "Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des ii. Jahrh. (Forsch. Z. christl. Lit. und Dgmg.)."

and another (Job xxv. 3): "*Is there a number to his hosts?*", and yet another (Dan. vii. 10): "*Ten thousands and ten thousands will serve him and myriads are before him.*" How are these passages to be explained? Before Israel was driven out of their land, "*there was no number to God's hosts*"; after they had been driven out, [only] "*thousands and myriads serve him.*" As it were, the *family* above had been diminished.[1]

§ 43.

And I *will bless them* (v. 27). [It is emphasised here], so that the Israelites should not say: "our blessing depends on the priests," and the priests should not say: "*we* will bless Israel"; (cf. Deut. ii. 7; xv. 6; vii. 14; xxviii. 12; Ez. xxviii. 15; xxxiv. 14).

§ 58.

Moses in the Tent of Meeting (Num. vii. 89)

And when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with him [when he heard the voice speaking unto him from above the mercy seat that was upon the ark of the testimony from between the two cherubim, and he spake unto him].

It says (Lev. i. 1): "And the Lord spoke to him from the *tent of meeting.*" Is one to understand it in the literal sense? But it says (Ex. xxv. 22): "*And I will speak to thee from above the mercy seat*" (Kapporeth)? It cannot be "from the tent of meeting," because it says "from the kapporeth"; and yet it could not be "from the kapporeth," because it says expressly "from the tent of meeting." How can these passages be

[1] The tragedy of God's people affected the dwellers on high. "The upper family" (familia), cf. Eph. iii. 15, is a frequent designation of the angelic world.

reconciled? This is a rule in the torah : [1] Two passages which contradict each other should remain as they are until a third passage is found to reconcile them, [and here we have it], for what, then, is the meaning of the words, " went into the tent of meeting to speak with him"? It suggests that Moses entered into and stood " *in the tent of meeting*," and the voice of God came down from the heaven of heavens and passed between the two cherubim and Moses heard the voice speaking to him inside.

§ 61.

The Divine Pattern of the Candlestick

(Num. viii. 14)

And this was the work of the candlestick, beaten work of gold, etc., according to the pattern which the Lord shewed Moses, so he made the candlesticks. R. Akiba says: " This is one of the three things which were difficult for Moses to understand, until the Holy One pointed them out with His finger, as it were." ("*This*" suggests that Moses did not know exactly how to make the candlestick and God had to show him a pattern. The other two are Ex. xii. 2; Lev. xi. 29).

According to the pattern which the Lord shewed Moses so he made the candlestick. This is to affirm the obedience of Moses: as God told him so he did. R. Nathan says: " These words seem superfluous, for it had already been said, '*As he saw so he did*' (Ex. xxv. 40), but they suggest that the Holy One shewed Moses ready-made vessels and a candlestick, and it was made accordingly; as it is said: '*According to the pattern which the Lord shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick.*' " [2]

[1] Cf. Introduction, and Schwarz, " Die hermeneutische Antinomie " (Wien und Leipzig, 1913), p. 27 ff.

[2] Cf. Heb. viii. 5; ix. 23, 24.

§§ 62–63.

The Levites (Num. viii. 23–26)

§ 62.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying: "*From twenty and five years upwards they* (*the Levites*) *shall go in to the service.*" "*Years*" (*i.e.* below or above the age-limit) make the Levites unfit, but bodily blemishes do not make them unfit [for service]. For one might deduce by inference [that Levites with bodily blemishes should be unfit]; for if, where "years" do not make unfit for service (*i.e.* priests), blemishes do, the more so in the case of Levites whom age makes unfit," therefore it says here: "*This is that which belongeth unto the Levites*": *years* make the Levites unfit, but not blemishes (*i.e.* a Levite who is less than twenty-five years of age or older than fifty is not allowed to serve in the Temple; but if he has a bodily blemish it does not exclude him).

And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the Lord and shall serve no more. R. Nathan says: "One verse says, '*from twenty-five years and upwards*,' and another verse says, '*from thirty years*' (Num. iv. 23). How are these passages to be explained? From twenty-five years for *apprenticeship* (learning), and from thirty for actual service."

§ 63.

And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the Lord (lit. "from the service") (v. 25). From this one might deduce that they are prohibited from taking part in *any service;* therefore it is added: "*From the service in the work of the tent of meeting, serving his brethren in the tent of meeting,*" to suggest that they are allowed to do the service of closing up the gates and the [duties] of the sons of Gershon.

And he should serve his brethren, etc. This supplementary sentence is to emphasise the fact that the law about the age-limit concerns only the Levites, but not the priests. For otherwise one might include the priests in the law about the age-limit by inference from deduction: if Levites, who are not made unfit for Temple service through bodily blemishes, yet become unfit through "years," then priests, who become unfit for service through any blemish, ought certainly to be affected by age; therefore this passage. Before they (the Israelites) settled in the Land, Levites were fit [for service] from thirty years to fifty, and the priests from the time of maturity (lit. "when they brought forth two hairs"), but as soon as they have entered the Land, the Levites were only considered unfit through voice-[blemish]. (Text defective, cf. P. Berakoth, 7*b*.)

§§ 65–71.

The Passover (Num. ix. 1–14)

§ 65.

Let the children of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed season (Num. ix. 2). And in (Ex. xii. 6) it says: "*And all the children of Israel should slaughter* [*the Passover lamb*]," so that one may take it to mean [1] [that the Passover lamb must be slaughtered] on the 14th of Nisan, whether it fall on a Sabbath or a weekday (*i. e.* the offering of the Passover lamb abrogates the Sabbath). But what are we to do with [2] the words: "*All who profane the Sabbath should die*"? [That refers] to other works, but not to the killing of the Passover. But, perchance, also to the killing of the

[1] Lit. "I hear."
[2] Lit. "How do I keep intact (fulfil)?"

Passover? It says (emphatically): "*And they shall kill it.*" [1] But perhaps these words refer only to week-days.? But it says here: "Let the children of Israel keep the Passover *in its due season.*" [2] Thus R. Josiah; but, said R. Jonathan to him: "This passage supplies no definite proof" (*i.e.* "the appointed time" might simply mean if it fall on a week-day, but not on the Sabbath). But said R. Josiah: "It says (Num. xxviii. 1): '*My offering, etc., shall ye observe to offer unto me in its due season* (*be'mo'ado*).' [What does *bemoado* specially emphasise?] That the daily sacrifice abrogates the Sabbath? But it is not necessary [to emphasise it here specially], for it already says: '*And on the Sabbath Day two lambs*' (Num. xxviii. 9). Why then this repetition? It is mentioned here in order to serve us as an inference *ex analogia*. Here it says, '*in its due season,*' and there it says: '*in its due season*'; as in the latter case the law expressly provides that it was to be sacrificed also on the Sabbath day (as there the expression '*in its due season*' means that the offering must take place at the appointed time under all circumstances, even on the Sabbath), so also here the expression '*in due season*' means that the offering of the Passover should take place at the time appointed, even on Sabbath." [3]

§ 67.

And they kept the Passover in the first month on the 14th day of the month (Num. ix. 5). This passage emphasises Israel's lack of piety,[4] [namely] that this

[1] Without any specification of the day.

[2] *I. e.* when the appointed time comes, whether it fall on a week-day or on a Sabbath, it *must be slaughtered.*

[3] On the 14th, whether it fall on a week-day or on a Sabbath. The text is here defective, and our translation is based on the parallel reading in the Mekilta, Amsterdam ed., p. 5*a*.

[4] Lit. "Scripture speaks of the faultiness of Israel."

was the only Passover that was kept by them [in the wilderness]. Similarly it says (Amos v. 25): "*Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?*"

R. Shimeon ben Joḥai says: "*Israel* did not bring any sacrifice, but who did? *The tribe of Levi;* as it is said (Deut. xxxiii. 10): '*They* (*the tribe of Levi*) *put incense before Thee and burnt sacrifice upon Thine altar.*'" Cf. Ex. xxxii. 26.

Israel worshipped idols,[1] and the tribe of Levi did not, as it is said, "*For they* (*the tribe of Levi*) *have observed thy word*" (Deut. xxxiii. 9).

Again it says (Josh. v. 5): "*But all the people that were born in the wilderness . . . they had not circumcised.*" The Israelites did not keep circumcision, but who did? The tribe of Levi (cf. Deut. xxxiii. 9).

According as the Lord commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel. This [on the other hand] emphasises the goodness (praiseworthiness) of Israel: As Moses told them, so they did.

§ 68.

And those men said unto him, We are defiled, etc. Wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the Lord in his appointed season? (Num. ix. 7).

He (Moses) replied to them: "Sacrifices are not offered in defilement."[2] Said they: "If not (if we are not allowed to participate in eating), let [at least] the blood be sprinkled [on us] and the flesh be eaten by undefiled persons!" For one can deduce by inference that, if the blood of a sin-offering, which belongs to the highest class of sacrifices, is sprinkled on defiled

[1] Lit. "strange service."
[2] *I.e.* by persons who are levitically impure.

persons and its flesh eaten by undefiled ones, the more so ought it to be the case with the Passover sacrifice which belongs to the minor grades."

He replied (emphatically): "Sacrifices are not offered in defilement!" Said they: "If sacrifices which can be postponed can be sacrificed (if for some reasons a sin-offering, for instance, was made unfit for to-day, it can be offered the next day), the more so ought it to be with a sacrifice which cannot be postponed (as is the case with the Passover)!" [1]

Stand and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you. It is like saying: "I will hear a word from the mouth of my Rabbi!" Blessed is he (Moses), born of woman,[2] that he was so certain that any time he desired he could speak to God![3] R. Hidka [4] said: "Shimeon the Shekemite was my colleague, one of the disciples of R. Akiba, and he said: 'Moses knew well that no defiled person could eat the Passover.' The point of discussion being whether the Passover blood might be sprinkled upon them (the defiled persons). Moses was worthy that this law also about defiled persons [in connexion with Passover] should have been given to him by God [independently of that incident], but these persons had the merit that it should be connected with them. For "good things are brought about by the agency of good men and bad things by the agency of bad men."

§ 69.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying: Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your

[1] Note the genuine Rabbinic dialectical method ascribed to Moses and his generation.

[2] Cf. Matt. xi. 11.

[3] Note the appreciation of an intimate relation to God.

[4] An elder scholar of R. Akiba (cf. Bacher, *Tann.* i. 447).

generations shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet shall he keep the Passover unto the Lord, in the second month on the fourteenth day at even he shall keep it (Num. ix. 9–11).

Or be on a journey afar off (*rĕḥōkāh*): there is a point on the top of the *ḥ* of *reḥokah*—" afar off "—to suggest that even when a person was near Jerusalem, but was defiled, he should not participate in the Passover-offering. Similarly Gen. xvi. 5; xviii. 9; xix. 33; xxxvii. 12; Num. xxi. 30; xxix. 15.

Similarly in Deut. xxix. 28: *The hidden things belong to the Lord our God, but the revealed things* TO OUR CHILDREN AND TO US. There is a point over the last words, to suggest that He (God) said to them: " When you have fulfilled those words that have been *revealed* to you, I will also proclaim unto you the *hidden things*." [1]

In the second month on the fourteenth day they shall keep it; they shall keep it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Scripture here adds two (new) commandments (namely unleavened bread and bitter herbs, in connexion with the Passover) apart from the commandment which refers to the *Passover lamb itself*,[2] namely: " Ye shall not break a bone of it."

§ 71.

And if a stranger[3] *shall sojourn among you and will keep the Passover unto the Lord* (Numb. ix. 14). Should

[1] *I. e.* although the text plainly says that the divine mysteries are hidden from men, who are only to concentrate on what has been revealed to them, the point above the last words of the sentence suggests that those who do the will of God will be led, by His Spirit, into esoteric wisdom. This is one of the chief doctrines of Jewish mysticism (cf. John xvi. 12).

[2] Lit. " a commandment which is said in reference to *its body*." It seems to me probable that " My Body," gufi, in the Words of the Institution, has a similar meaning: He is the real Passover—" *the lamb itself* " (gufi = Myself).

[3] *Gēr* = proselyte.

one infer from this that as soon as a Gentile has become a proselyte he should keep the Passover at once (*i. e.* even if it is not Passover time)? It says, "*Both for the sojourner and him that is born in the land*": as a native [Israelite] has to keep the Passover on the 14th, so also the proselyte. R. Shimeon ben El'azar says: "Suppose a person became a proselyte between the two Passovers [*i. e.* during the month Nisan 14th and Iyyar 14th], should he keep the second Passover?" It says: "*As him that is born in the land*": as he who is born in the land can only celebrate the second Passover, if he has not kept the first (because of defilement or distance), so it is only he who has not observed the first should observe the second (but a Gentile who has embraced Judaism between the two Passovers must not keep the second, for the law applies only to an Israelite who is obliged to keep the second because, for certain reasons, he could not keep the first).

According to the statute of the Passover and according to the ordinance thereof so shall he do. From this we only know that the status of the proselyte is equal to that of the native (Israelite) in connexion with the *Passover*. How do we know [that he is equal] in connexion with *all* commandments? Because it says, "One statute shall be *to you and the proselyte.*"

§ 72.

The trumpets of silver (Num. x. 1–10).

MAKE THEE TWO TRUMPETS OF SILVER. Because it said previously (*ibid.*, ix. 23): "*According to the mouth of the Lord they encamped and according to the mouth of the Lord they journeyed,*" one might say that because they journeyed *according to the mouth* OF THE WORD and because they encamped ACCORDING TO THE MOUTH OF

THE WORD,[1] they did not need any trumpets [for their marching], therefore it says here: "*Make thee two trumpets of silver.*"

MAKE THEE, [*i. e.*] at thine own expense. [But wherever it says]: "*And they shall make them,*" [it means]: at the community's expense. Thus R. Josiah. R. Jonathan said: "In either case it is at the expense of the community; but when it says here: '*Make thee,*' it means this: when Israel *does* the will of God, then [they may give the silver trumpets] at their expense, but when Israel does not do the will of God, then '*make thee*' at thine own [Moses'] expense. [God says]: Then I have more pleasure in thine than in theirs!"

§ 75.

AND THE SONS OF AARON, THE PRIESTS, SHALL BLOW THE TRUMPETS (Num. x. 8). Whether they are with bodily blemish or without. Thus R. Tarphon. R. Akiba says: "[Only when they are] without blemish, because it says *here* '*priests,*' and it says *there* (in connexion with the sprinkling of the sacrifice) '*priests*'; as there the priests must be without blemish [if they are to perform sacrificial work] so here also [in connexion with the trumpets]." Said to him R. Tarphon: "How long wilt thou rake words together and bring them up against us? (What authority hast thou for thine assertion?) Akiba, I cannot bear it any longer! May I bury my sons (may I be bereaved of my sons),[2] if I had not seen Shimeon my mother's brother,[3] who was lame on

[1] *Dibber*, or *Dibbur*. Personification of the "Word." This adds another proof to the fact that the Logos-idea in John is not necessarily Philonic.

[2] R. Tarphon, being of a very excitable disposition, often used this phrase in discussions.

[3] A priest.

one foot and yet stood and blew the trumpets!" [1] Akiba replied: "Yes, Rabbi; but perhaps you saw it on the New Year's day, and on the Day of Atonement during the Yoḇel year [when it is certainly allowed]?"

R. Tarphon replied: "By the worship [of the Temple]! [2] Thou hast not invented this! Blessed art thou, Abraham our father, that Akiba came forth from thy loins! [3] Tarphon *saw*, and yet forgot, and Akiba just deduced it theoretically, and, [as it happens], it agrees with the *halaka*. Everyone who separates himself from thee is as though he were separating himself from his own life." [4]

§ 76.

AND WHEN YE GO TO WAR IN YOUR LAND AGAINST THE ADVERSARY THAT OPPRESSES YOU (Num. x. 9). Both offensive and defensive warfare are meant (lit. "whether they come against you or ye come against them").

AGAINST THE ADVERSARY THAT OPPRESSES YOU. This refers to the war of Gog and Magog (*i. e.* the future Messianic war, Ezek. xxxviii). Thou sayest, it refers to the war of Gog and Magog, but perhaps it refers to all other wars mentioned in the torah? It goes on to say here: "*And ye shall be saved from your enemies.*" Come and see: which war is it [of which it can be said] that it will result in Israel's victory and which will not be followed by a renewed subjection [to the empires]? It can only be the war of Gog and Magog.[5] Again it

[1] Note the theoretical nature of these discussions. Akiba lays down the law, but is confronted with a concrete fact. The extension of this discussion on theory extends throughout the halaka.

[2] Cf. Matt. xxiii. 16–21.

[3] Cf. Luke xi. 27.

[4] Cf. John vi. 68.

[5] The expression, "And ye shall be saved," suggests that it will be the last War, ending in victory for Israel; all other historical wars did not result in permanent freedom.

says: "*And Yahweh will go out and fight against those nations*" (Zech. xiv. 3). What follows? "*And the Lord will be king over the whole earth*" (9).[1]

THEN YE SHALL BLOW YOUR TRUMPETS, ETC., AND THEY SHALL BE TO YOU FOR A MEMORIAL BEFORE THE LORD YOUR GOD. R. Akiba says: "Were then the trumpets the memorial? Was not the blood [*of the sacrifice*] [2] the real memorial? It suggests that if they were able to blow the trumpets and did not, [God says]: 'I consider it (lit. impute it to them) as if they were not remembered before Me.'"

AND THEY SHALL BE A MEMORIAL TO YOU, AND YE SHALL BE SAVED. Lo, whenever Israel is "remembered," it is in order to be saved.[3]

§§ 78–81.

Moses and his father-in-law (Num. x. 29–32).

§ 78.

And Moses said to Ḥobab the son of Reuel. Was then his name Ḥobab? Was it not Reuel? (As it is said: "And they came to *Reuel their father*," Ex. ii. 18.) And yet it also says (Jud. iv. 11): "Now Heber the Kenite which was of the children of *Ḥobab, the father-in-law of Moses*." Little children call their grandfather "father" (Abba). R. Shimeon ben Menassya [4] says: "He was called Reuel [because he was] the friend of God (*Reeh El*), as it is said, '*And Aaron and all the elders of Israel* CAME TO EAT BREAD WITH THE FATHER-

[1] A proof that the apocalyptic battle will be the last one, for it will establish the universal Kingdom of God.

[2] Or: of martyred Israel, which causes God to have mercy upon His people.

[3] Lit. "for savings."

[4] Second century. Together with R. Jose b. Mesulam, he was the head of a fellowship called the "holy community."

IN-LAW OF MOSES BEFORE GOD.'" [1] R. Dosthai [2] says: "His name was *Keni*. Why? Because he *separated* himself from that which makes God JEALOUS (*kinoa*), namely idolatry; as it is said, 'They have moved me to jealousy (*kinuni*) with that which is not God'" (Deut. xxxii. 21); cf. Ezek. viii. 5.

R. Jose says: "His name was Keni. Why? Because (by becoming a Monotheist) he came to take POSSESSION of heaven and earth and the torah (*kanah*—to buy or possess)." [3] R. Ishmael ben Rabbi Jose [4] says: "His name was Reuel. Why? Because he JOINED the company of God,[5] as it is said: (Prov. xxvii. 10): '*Thine own friend and the friend of thy father* (interpreted to mean God and Israel), *forsake not*.'"

R. Shimeon ben Johai says: "He had two names, Ḥobab and Jithro. Jithro—because it was due to him that an additional [6] chapter in the torah was written (namely, the chapter about the judges, Ex. xviii. 21, which contains his advice to Moses).

Why was he called *Ḥobab?* Because he *loved* the torah (*ḥābab* = "to love"). For among proselytes we do not find *one* who loved the torah as much as did Jithro.

And as Jithro himself loved the torah, so did his descendants, as it is said (Jer. xxxv. 2): "*Go to the house of the Reḥabites and speak to them the word of the Lord.*" When they saw that that house (the Temple) was going to be destroyed, they considered it (the event)

[1] *I. e.* there is no contradiction; his second name was given to him because of his spiritual character.
"Eating before God" = being God's friend. The underlying idea of the Agape.

[2] Δοσίθεος. Beginning of 2nd century. (Probably b. R. Jehuda).

[3] The idea is: in finding the true God, he found the universe.

[4] Ben Ḥalaphta. Middle of 2nd century. He could write down from memory the whole of the Bible. Meggila 74 a.

[5] *Ri'ah lĕ'ēl.*

[6] "*yithar*" = "he added."

as if it had already happened, and "*dwelt in tents*" (as a sign of sorrow), "*according to what our father Jonadab commanded us.*" And because they did obey the commandment of their father Jonadab, God raised from among them scribes, as it is said (1 Chron. ii. 55): "*And the family of scribes, etc. These are the Kenites* that came of Hammath, *the father of the house of Reḥab.*" [1] (The Kenites are identical with the descendants of Jithro, cf. Judges i. 16: "*The sons of Keni, the father-in-law of Moses.*") What reward have they received [from God] for this? Read what it says in [Jer. xxxv. 18]: "*Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, therefore Jonadab the son of Reḥab shall not want a man* TO STAND BEFORE ME FOR EVER." R. Joshua says: "[Does it mean that they shall stand before God in the Temple?] Why even Israelites (non-priests) cannot enter the Temple! No, it means that they (the Reḥabites, the descendants of Jithro) will be members of the Sanhedrin and teach the words of the torah." Others say: "[The words: 'to stand before me' are to be taken literally]: some of their daughters have married priests, so that their sons actually brought sacrifices upon the altar (as priests)!" Now, these [Reḥabites, of Gentile origin], because they drew near [to God], God drew them [to Himself], much more so must it be the case with Israel [if] they keep the torah!

The same is true [2] of Rahab the harlot.[3] R. Eliezer

[1] Here follow lengthy allegorical interpretations of the names of the sub-divided families, which are taken to be appellations indicating the reason why God has especially favoured them. These interpretations are not more fanciful than Cheyne's Jerachmeel theories.

[2] Lit. "and that thou findest," etc.

[3] There follows an allegorical interpretation of the names in 1 Chron. iv. 21, indicating the merits of Rahab and the reward which she received from the spies.

says: ["The words: 'of the house of Asheba,' 1 Chron. iv. 21] refer to Rahab the harlot who was an *innkeeper*.[1] Eight priests and eight prophets descended from her! These they are: Jeremiah, Hilkiah, Seraiah, Machsaiah, Baruch, Neraiah, Hanamel, and Shallum." R. Jehuda says: "Also Hulda the prophetess was a descendant of Rahab." Now if she, who came from a people of whom it is said (Deut. xx. 16): 'Thou shalt not leave alive any soul,' because she drew near [to God], God drew her near [to Himself], much more so with Israel, etc."

This is also true of the Giheonites.

Thou findest the same thing in connexion with Ruth, the Moabitess. What did she say to her mother-in-law? "Thy people is my people, and thy God is my God." [Therefore] God said to her: "Thou hast lost nothing [by leaving thine own people]! Lo, thine is the kingdom in this world; lo, thine is the kingdom in the world to come."[2]

Whence do we know[3] that Ruth, the Moabitess, did not die until she saw Solomon, her grandson, sitting [upon a throne] and judging harlots? Because it says (1 Chron. iv. 22): "*With the king in his work.*"[4] Now, if she who belonged to a people of whom it is said

[1] ξενών. He interprets *Asheba* in connexion with *saba* = "to be satisfied."

[2] *I. e.* she will be the mother of kings and will also belong to the kingdom of God. Here follows an interpretation of the different names of the family of Naomi, showing up their bad qualities in contrast to Ruth.

[3] Lit. "sayest thou."

[4] This verse, together with the genealogies of the context, are also interpreted symbolically and connected with the narrative in the book of Ruth. Cf. Jerome's translation of this obscure passage, who, probably influenced by Rabb. interpretation, also connects it with Ruth: "*et qui stare fecit solem, virique mendacii . . . qui principes fuerunt in Moab et qui reversi sunt in Lahem: haec autem verba vetera.*" Jokim, "*qui stare fecit solem,*" is supposed to be Elimelech, and the "*viri mendacii*" —Mahlon and Chilion.

(1 Kings xi. 2): "Ye shall not go among them, and they shall not go among you," because she drew near to God, etc.

And if thou shouldst say: [such examples of God drawing to Himself those, who start by endeavouring themselves to draw near to Him, are found only among Gentiles], but not in Israel, lo, it says (Ex. i. 15): "The king of the Egyptians said to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphra, and the name of the other Pua." Shiphra is Yoḥebed; Pua is Miriam. [The one was called] Shiphra, because she helped [Israel] to "grow and multiply." [1] Also because she made the babies look beautiful,[2] and also because in her days the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied. [The other was called] *Pua*, because she fretted [3] and wept for her brother (Moses), as it says (Ex. ii. 4): "And his sister stood at a distance, to know what will happen to him." And it says (*ibid.*): "And the midwives feared God and He made them houses." Now, one would not know what exactly is meant by "*houses*," but when it says (1 Kings ix. 10): "When Solomon built both *houses*, *the house of the Lord and that of the king*," one knows that the "house of the Lord" is priesthood, and "the house of the king" is kingship [so that "He made them houses" means just this, that God rewarded the two with making them the ancestors of priests and kings]: Yoḥebed had the merit of priesthood,[4] and Miriam of kingship.[5] Miriam married Kaleb, of whom it says (1 Chron. ii. 19): "He took a wife with the name *Ephrath*." And of David it says (1 Sam. xvii. 12): "David was the son of that

[1] A play on words: *Shpra* = *Shepara* (we-rabah) = Who multiplied and made fruitful.

[2] *Shaphar* = "beautiful." [3] *Pa'a*—"to fret, cry out."

[4] *I. e.* she became the mother of priests.

[5] Here follow some fanciful proofs, founded on a play on words, which would be lost in the translation.

Ephrathite." Thus, David was descended from Miriam.[1] "Lo, he who draws near [to God] is being drawn near from heaven!"

And Moses said unto Ḥobab, We are journeying into the place of which the Lord said I will give it to you. To *you*, but proselytes have no part in it (the Holy Land). But how shall we reconcile this with that which says, "*Where the stranger* (*proselyte*) *will dwell, there also give him his portion*"? (Ezek. xlvii. 23). If this verse cannot be interpreted in the sense that he can own a part in the Holy Land, we must interpret it as referring to *atonement.* That is, if the proselyte dwelt among the tribe of Judah, he received atonement in that tribe, if he dwelt among the tribe of Benjamin, then he was atoned for there. ("*Atonement*" probably in connexion with the communal sacrifice; although he does not really belong to the Holy Land, having no *appointed* part in it, yet he has the privilege of forming part of the people of God in regard to forgiveness of sin.) Another interpretation. If [the verse in Ezek.] cannot be interpreted in connexion with possessing land, apply it to burial-places, for proselytes may be buried in the land of Israel.[2]

Come with me and we will do thee good. For is there

[1] This genealogical section is of great importance, as it throws light on the γενεαλογίαι in the Pastoral Epistles. All scholars agree that μύθοις και γενεαλογίαις in 1 Tim. i. 4 (cf. iv. 7 and Titus i. 14, iii. 9) form the background of the heresies against which the epistles fight, but since Bauer, N.T. criticism is divided about the nature of the ψευδώνυμος γνῶσις (cf. 1 Tim. vi. 20). Was it a Judaising gnosis, or a gnostic Judaism? But our passage, as well as later Rabbinic literature, shows what a *rôle* genealogical speculations played in Rabbinic Judaism. We often read about discussions concerning the origin of well-known Rabbis and about books of "genealogies" (cf. *Pes.* 62*b*; *Jebamoth*, 49*b*. Shimeon ben Azzai (A.D. 100) said: "I found a roll of genealogies in Jerusalem in which was written: 'N. N. was a bastard,'" etc.). Cf. also Euseb., *Hist. Eccles.*, i. 7, 13.

[2] *I. e.* "*give him his portion*": give him a burying-place in the Holy Land!

anyone belonging to anybody's household to whom one shows no good? If a person belonging to a *human* [1] household is well treated by that household, how much more he who belongs to the household of Him who said the world should be and it was!—*For the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel.* Had then God not spoken good concerning Israel until now? These words mean that God has commanded Israel to do good to proselytes and to treat them gently.[2]

§ 79.

And he said, I will not go (Num. x. 30). He said: "[Shall I go] for riches' sake, or in order to get land? I will not go! One man has land, but no movable property; another has property, but no family; but I have land, riches, family, and I was a judge in my town! If I should not go back for the sake of my land, I must go because of my other property, and if not for that, because of my family."

§ 80.

And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee (*na*) (Num. x. 31). The expression "na" always means petition. He said to him: "If thou dost not accept my invitation, then I demand of thee [to come with us]! Otherwise Israel will say: 'Jithro did not become a proselyte out of love [to God].[3] He thought that proselytes would have a part in the land of Israel, but when he saw that it

[1] Lit. "of flesh and blood."

[2] *I. e.* the verse is interpreted to mean: The Lord has spoken to Israel to be good (to proselytes). Cf. Mekilta: The proselyte is greater than the righteous Israelite, for of the righteous it says that he loves God, but of the proselyte—that God loves him.

[3] No Gentile must be received into membership of the Jewish Church, unless his motives are pure.

was not to be so, he left them and went back!'" Another version. [Moses said to him]: "If thou art not willing to accept the rich pastural grounds of Jericho,[1] I order thee (to do so), for otherwise Israel will say: 'Jithro did not become a proselyte out of love, for he thought that his gift would be great, but now that he sees that his gift is not so great, he left them and returned to his own land!'" Another version. [Moses said to him]: "Dost thou think that [by becoming a proselyte] thou hast increased the glory of God? No! Thou hast diminished it! How many proselytes and slaves wilt thou gather under the wings of the Shekina!"[3]

Forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou shalt be to us instead of eyes. Moses said to him: "If thou hadst not seen the signs and wonders in the wilderness and then left us and returned to thine own country, it would be comprehensible; but now, after thou hast seen all these, wilt thou leave us and go? Leave us not, I pray thee." R. Judah said: "He said to him, 'Thou thyself hast seen the grace which was given to our fathers in Egypt (as it is said (Ex. xii. 36), "*And the Lord gave the people grace in the eyes of the Egyptians*"), and now wilt thou leave us and go? Leave us not, I pray thee.'"

And thou shalt be to us eyes. [Which means]: "Is it not enough for thee that thou shalt sit with me in council and teach the words of the torah?"

And thou shalt be to us eyes. "Is it not enough for thee, that thou wilt be the light of our eyes?"[4]

[1] Cf. § 81.

[2] Another soul acknowledging Him.

[3] Jithro, as the first proselyte, was the forerunner of the great mass of foreigners who were afterwards added to the commonwealth of Israel. Not an unmixed blessing!

[4] When something in reference to the will of God is hidden from our eyes.

Another interpretation: "Thou wilt be dear to us as the ball of the eye"; as it is said: "*And ye shall love the proselyte*" (Deut. x. 19). Again it says (Ex. xxiii. 9): "*Thou shalt not treat a proselyte badly.*" Again it says (Ex. xxii. 20): "*Thou shalt not deceive the proselyte nor crush him.*"

§ 81.

And it shall be if thou go with us what good soever the Lord shall do unto us the same we will do unto thee (Num. x. 32). And what was the "good" that they did unto him? It is said that when Israel was dividing the land, they left the rich pasture ground of Jericho 500 cubits length and 500 cubits breadth, and they said: "He, in whose portion the temple will be built, should take the rich ground of Jericho!" But they gave it [previously] to Jonadab, the son of Reḥab [and his descendants]. They gave them the chief portion, and fed them 440 years, as it is said (1 Kings vi. 1): "*And in the 480th year of the going out from Egypt the Temple was built.*" Take off from this sum forty years that Israel spent in the wilderness, and it will be found that they sustained them 440 years.[1] And when the Shekina began to dwell in the portion of Benjamin,[2] the sons of Benjamin came to take their appointed portion, and they (the Kenites) stood up and deported,[3] as it is said, "And the sons of Keni the father-in-law of Moses went up from the city of palms" (Jud. i. 16).[4]

[1] *I. e.* the descendants of Jithro were kept as guests by Israel from the first year of their entrance into Canaan until the Temple was built. But when the Temple was finished, they had to remove from the neighbourhood of Jericho.

[2] In Jerusalem.

[3] *I. e.* they did not wait until they were told to do so.

[4] Jericho.

§§ 82–84.

The pillar of cloud, and the Ark of the Lord (Num. x. 33–36).

§ 82.

And they set forward from the mount of the Lord three days journey, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them three days journey to seek out a resting-place for them (Num. x. 33). This suggests[1] that the Shekinah went in advance of them thirty-six miles on that day, in order that they should enter the land.[2] They (the sages) told it in a parable. What can it be likened unto? It is like unto men who go out to war. On the way to the battlefield they rejoice, but as soon as they get exhausted, their hands hang down. But it was not so with Israel; for when they got tired, they encouraged each other and said: "Come, let us take the land of Israel in possession!"[3] Another interpretation. They said: "Our fathers have sinned, and it was decreed by God that 'their bodies should fall in the wilderness' Num. xiv. 29. Let us not sin [like them], lest we should die, but let us go and take the land of Israel in possession!"

And the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them. This ark which went with them into the camp

[1] Text defective.

[2] The language here and in the following parables is very laconic, and the text evidently corrupt, but the underlying idea is God's loving care for Israel and His eagerness that they should enter the Land. For another beautiful personification of the Shekinah, cf. Introduction to *Lamentations Rabba* xxv, in connexion with God's departure from the Temple at the destruction: "It is like unto a king who one day went out of his palace in great anger. Every now and then he returned to the palace, and embracing its walls and its pillars, he would say tearfully, "Hail! O beloved palace of mine; Hail! O house of my glory! Peace be to thee for evermore!"

[3] *I. e.* the glorious object in view encouraged them, especially as God (the Shekinah) went before them.

contained the broken tablets [of the law].[1] R. Shimeon ben Joḥai says: "It is a parable. It is like to a Viceroy (ante-Cæsar) who went before his armies to prepare for them a place where they should camp; so the Shekina went before Israel and prepared for them a place where they should dwell."

To seek out a resting-place for them. ("Seek out"—*la-thur*.) What is the meaning of these words? It is an allusion to the words, *And the Canaanite, the King of Arad, heard* (Num. xxi. 1), (namely) as soon as the Canaanites heard that the *spies* were dead, they said: "Their *spies* [who went to investigate the land] are dead, let us go and fight against them."[2] R. Shimeon ben Joḥai says: "It says: '*for Israel passed the way of* ITHARIM,' which means: *I-tharim, i. e.* no guides.[3] For as soon as Aaron died, the Canaanites said: 'Their high priest is dead, their *great guide* (*tayyar*) and the pillar of cloud, which fought for them, have gone.[4] Lo! the best time to fight them!'" R. Shimeon ben Joḥai says: "Israel was much to be blamed, for at the time when they said, '*Let us send men to investigate the land*' (Deut. i. 22), God said to them: 'If when ye have been in the wilderness, I have fed you and supported you, how much more will it be the case when ye enter into a good and wide land, a land flowing with milk and honey.'"[5]

§ 83.

And the cloud of the Lord was over them by day (Num. x. 34). Hence they (the sages) said that there were seven clouds (cf. Ex. xl. 28; Num. ix. 19; xiv. 14).

[1] Here follows a Scripture proof from Num. xiv. 44, but the text is corrupt.

[2] *That Israel came through the way of the Atharim*, interpreted in the sense of tharim—spies (cf. A.V.), as coming from the same root as *thur* in our text, "to seek out."

[3] Like *I-Kabod* = "no glory."

[4] Cf. for style John xiv. 3.

[5] Cf. Mark viii. 19.

Four on their four sides, one above, and one below, and one in front. Every hilly place it (the cloud) levelled, and every depression it raised, and it killed the serpents and the scorpions.[1] R. Judah says: "There were *thirteen* clouds: two on every side, two above, two below, and one in front." R. Josiah says: "There were four." Rabbi says: "There were two."

And the cloud of the Lord was over them by day. Over the lame, over the blind, over those with an issue, and over the lepers.

And the cloud, etc. Whence do we know (sayest thou) that if one of the Israelites dropped out from under the wings of the cloud, the pillar of cloud gathered him from behind until he joined the main body? Because it says: "*And the cloud of the Lord was over them.*" Should we think that, as it shielded the Israelites, so it also shielded the peoples of the world? It says: "Over *them;*" only Israel it shielded, not the nations of the world. Should we think that as it shielded them by day, it shielded them also by night? It says: "*By day.*" R. Shimeon ben El'azar said: "Whence do we know that all the forty years that the Israelites spent in the desert they had no need for a lamp, but even if a person went into the innermost part of a house, a lantern,[2] as it were, entered with him and stayed until he returned? Because it goes on to say: '*For the eyes of the whole house of Israel in all their journeys.*' Lo, even if a man went into the innermost part of a house, the pillar of fire lighted before him!"

§ 84.

And it came to pass when the ark set forward (Num. x. 35). There is a point above and a point below it,[3]

[1] Israel was surrounded by the Divine Glory, as it were, *shrouded* in divinity.

[2] *φανός.*

[3] A massoretic sign on "when . . . set forward."

to indicate that the [1] place (of this passage) is elsewhere. (What ought to follow v. 34 is the statement in ch. ix: "The people were as murmurers," etc.) Rabbi said: "Because this verse is a distinct book by itself." Hence the sages deduced the law that a book of Scripture which has been erased and eighty-five letters only remained (*as in this passage* v. 35), defiles the hands.[2] R. Shimeon says: "There is a point above and a point below the word '*binso'a*,' because its place is not here. What ought to come here is: *And the people were murmuring*.[3] Here is a parable. To what can this be likened? It is like unto persons who said to a king: 'See that you meet us and go with us to the governor of Akko.' But when the king came to Akko, the governor had gone to Tyre, so the king followed him there, and the people followed the king; when the king came to Tyre, the governor had gone to Sidon; when they came to Sidon, the governor had gone to Biri; when they came to Biri, he had gone to Antioch; when they came to Antioch, the people began to murmur against the king, that they had had to make these journeys. But it was the king who rightly could complain, because he had taken all that trouble for their sakes. In the same manner did the Shekina walk on that day thirty-six miles in advance, in order that Israel should enter the land. And they began to murmur against God, that they had the trouble of all that journey, but it was God who rightly could complain, for it was for their sakes that the Shekina went

[1] *I. e.* vv. 35, 36.

[2] Every Scripture when touched "defiles" the hands by reason of its sanctity, but a verse by itself containing less than eighty-five letters is not considered a book.

[3] *I. e.* chapter xi ought to follow x. 34 with the incidents about the mourners, etc. This verse (35) *seems* to have nothing to do with the context, and yet there is a connexion.

that day thirty-six miles in advance, in order that they might enter the land." [1]

And Moses said, Rise up, O Lord! (x. 35). But in another passage (ix. 23) we read: "They encamped BY THE MOUTH OF THE LORD *and they journeyed by the mouth of the Lord.*" How should these verses be reconciled in meaning? [2] It is like unto a king who was going on a journey, and he took his friend with him. When he started to march, he said, "I am not going to march until my friend is ready." And when he rested: "I am not going to rest until my friend is ready." Thus both verses are reconciled: They encamped by the mouth of Moses and they encamped by the mouth of the Lord; they marched by the mouth of Moses and they marched by the mouth of the Lord.[3]

And let them that hate thee flee before thee.

Has God (He Who spake and the world was) enemies? It means: who hates Israel is as one who hates God. Similarly (Ex. xv. 7): "*In the abundance of thy greatness thou hast destroyed those who rise up against thee.*" Can anyone rise up against Him, (Who spake and the world was)? He who rises against Israel, is as one who rises against God. Cf. Ps. lxxiv. 23; xcii. 10; lxxiii. 27; lxxxviii. 3; lxxxiii. 4; cxxxix. 21.

Similarly (Zech. ii. 12): "*He who touches you is as one who touches the apple of his eye.*" R. Judah says: "It does not say, 'the apple of *an* eye,' but 'the apple of HIS eye.' If it were possible to say so, [one could

[1] Text uncertain.

[2] *I. e. bi-neso'a* and *u-benuḥo* are taken in the optative sense. If Moses appointed the time, then God had not commanded it; if God had appointed it, then it was not necessary for Moses to remind God to start.

[3] It is not quite clear what connexion there is between the parable and the text. In any case, it is assumed that Moses, "the friend of God," had to announce to God his arrangements about the time of resting and journeying.

say that] it refers to Him Who is above, only that the Scripture modifies the expression (to avoid anthropomorphism); cf. Job vii. 20; Ezek. viii. 17; Hab. i. 12; similarly Ps. cvi. 20; Num. xi. 15; xii. 12; Jer. ii. 11.

And he who helps Israel helps God (Him who spake and the world was), as it is said: "*Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of the Lord, Curse ye its inhabitants, for they did not come to the help of the Lord, the help of the Lord among the heroes*" (Jud. v. 23). R. Shimeon ben E'alzar says: "No member of the body is as precious as the eye,[1] and God compares Israel with it. Here is a parable. When a man receives a blow on the head, he shuts his eyes. Yea, no member of the body is as precious as the eye, and God compares Israel with it (cf. Prov. xxxi. 2 (What, my son?) [2] iv. 3)."

R. Jose ben El'azar says: "It is like unto a man who puts his finger into his eye and makes it water. 'Pharaoh was cruel to you (has touched you); what did I do unto him? '*Chariots of Pharaoh and his horses He overthrew in the sea*' (Ex. xv. 4). Sisera attempted to fight you (touched you); what did I unto him? '*From heaven they fought against Sisera*' (Judges v. 20). Sennacherib touched you—'*And the angel of the Lord came and slew the host of Assyria*' (2 Kings xix. 35). Nebuchadnezzar—'*ate grass like an ox.*' Haman—'And they hanged him on a tree.' And so each time when Israel is subjected by the empires, the *Shekina*, as it were, is subjected with them, as it is said (Ex. xxiv. 10): *And he saw the God of Israel and, as it were, under his feet a paved work of sapphire.*[3] Again it

[1] Cf. Matt. vi. 22.

[2] This is applied to Israel: God is the father; the community of Israel (= the Church) is the son. Cf. Berakoth, 35*b*.

[3] *libnath ha-saphir*. The word *lebanah*, the gleaming (of the sapphire), is interpreted in the sense of *lĕbênah* = "brick," in

says: '*In all their affliction He was afflicted*' (Isa. lxiii. 5)."

From this we only know that God suffers in the affliction of the community. How do we know that He also participates in the suffering of the individual? Because it says (Ps. xci. 15): "*He will call upon Me and I will answer him. I will be with him in distress.*" It also says (Gen. xxxix. 20): "*And the Lord was with Joseph (in his distress).*"

It says (2 Sam. vii. 23): "*Because of Thy people whom Thou hast redeemed [unto] Thee from Egypt a nation* AND HIS GOD." [1] R. Eliezer says: "*An* IDOL crossed the Red Sea with them; and which was it? It was the image of Micah." [2] R. Akiba says: "Had we not a direct Scripture, it would be impossible to say it!—Israel said to God: 'Thou hast redeemed *Thee!*'"

Thus we find that wherever they went into exile, the Shekina went with them (cf. 1 Sam. ii. 27).[4] They were exiled to Babylon, and the Shekina went with them; as it is said: "For your sake I was *sent* into exile" (Isa. xliii. 14).[5] They were exiled to Elam, and the shekina went with them, as it is said: "*I will set up my throne in Elam*" (Jer. xlix. 38). They went to Edom; and the Shekina went with them, as it is said (Isa.

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order to suggest that Israel's afflictions in Egypt (their having had to work in mortar and brick) were always remembered before the Throne of God.

[1] Interpreted in the sense that *God Himself was redeemed* with His people.

[2] *I. e.* "and his God" is interpreted in the sense that even Israel's idol was redeemed! This legend has crept into the Koran.

[3] *I. e.* not "*to* Thee," but "*Thyself.*" The Immanence of God is here implied. The idea of God "redeeming Himself" reminds one of some modern philosophic speculations.

[4] *Niglēthi* (I have revealed Myself) in the sense of "I have gone into exile."

[5] *Shullahti, pual*, instead of *piel*. Is not here a distinction within the Being of God implied?

lxiii. 1) : "*Who is He that cometh from Edom?*" And when they return (in the Messianic Age), the Shekina will return with them; as it is said (Num. xxx. 3) : "*And the Lord thy God will bring back thy captivity.*" It does not say "*wĕ-hĕshib,*" but "*wĕ-shāb,*" [1] that is, He Himself will return. Again it says (Song iv. 8) : "*Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon.*" [2]

§§ 85–96.

Taberah and Kibroth ha-taavah (Num. xi. 1–35).

§ 85.

And the people were complaining evil in the ears of the Lord (Num. xi. 1). THE PEOPLE, that is the *wicked ones* [among them].

Cf. Ex. xvii. 4 : "What shall I do TO THIS PEOPLE?"

Numb. xiv. 11 : "How long will *this people* despise me?"

Jer. xiii. 10 : "*This people, evil people who refuse to hear my word.*"

Jer. xiv. 10 : "Thus saith the Lord TO THIS PEOPLE."

And when God calls them "MY PEOPLE," he means only the GOOD ONES, as it is said (Ex. vii. 16) : "*Send my people.*"

Mic. vi. 3 : "*My people,* what have I done unto thee?"

Mic. vi. 5 : "*My people,* remember, etc."

"*Were complaining*" (ke-metonenim). *Metonenim* means "grumblers." They looked for a pretext to separate themselves from God (cf. 2 Kings v. 7; Judges xiv. 4).

[1] It does not use *Hiphil*, but the *Kal*.

[2] In the allegorical interpretation God (the Bridegroom) says this to Israel (the Bride).

IN THE EARS OF THE LORD. This suggests that the Israelites intended to make God Himself hear (their complaints).[1] R. Shimeon says: "Here is a parable. Unto what can it be likened? It is like unto one who was cursing the king, and when the king passed by, the people said unto the offender: 'Hush, lest the king hear thee!' He replied: 'How do you know that I did not *intend* that he *should* hear'?"

§ 86.

AND THE PEOPLE CRIED TO MOSES (Num. xi. 2). But how could *Moses* help them? It ought to have been said of them: "And they cried *unto the Lord!*" R. Shimeon says: "Here is a parable. Unto what can it be likened? It is like unto a king who got angry with his son, and the son went to one of his father's friends and said to him: 'Go and intercede with my father[2] for me.' In the same manner the children of Israel went to Moses and said: 'Intercede with God for us.' Should we think that Moses was unwilling? It says: '*And Moses cried unto the Lord.*' Should we think that *God* was unwilling (to answer)? It says: *And the fire abated* (lit. 'sunk'); that is, the fire sunk in its place; if it had gone up into the sky, they would all have turned back to their sin; or if the fire had passed to one side, it would have swept away all the people who were on that side."

So far, we do not yet know who those were who taught Israel to sin, but when it says: "And the MIXED MULTITUDE (from assaph = 'to gather') *who were among them lusted exceedingly*," we see that these were the *proselytes* which were "gathered from all sorts of places." R. Shimeon ben Menassya says: "They were

[1] *I. e.* they *intended that it should grieve directly God*, the complaints should *reach His ears*, so evil was their nature.
[2] *Abba.*

the ELDERS, as it is said: 'GATHER to me seventy men from the ELDERS of Israel'" (Ex. vi. 16). If the elders behaved thus, we can imagine the state of the masses![1]

Similarly, we read (Gen. vi. 2): *And the sons of God saw the daughters of men.* What have the sons of judges[2] done? They have taken hold of women in the street and have sinned with them. If the sons of the judges behaved thus, we can imagine what the masses[3] did!

§ 87.

We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, etc. (Num. xi. 5). R. Shimeon says: "The manna tasted according to their fancy, except for these five kinds of food (viz. melons, cucumber, leeks, onions and garlic).[4] Here is a parable: it is like unto a king (of flesh and blood) who sent his son to a tutor (pedagogue), and charged him saying: "See that my son does not eat bad food or drink bad drinks!" But the son murmured against the father, saying: "Not because he loves me, but because he does not wish me to eat, has he ordered this!" The sages say: "The manna tasted according to their fancy, but they saw only manna, as it is said: 'Our soul is dried away, there is nothing at all save this manna *to look upon.*'"

[1] Lit. "If the elders did thus, [by induction of] kal wa-ḥomer, [we can realise] other sons of men."

[2] According to Rabbinical tradition bne Elohim = "sons of judges." Cf. John x. 34 for a similar interpretation of Elohim.

[3] *Taratin.* Origin uncertain.

[4] Lit. "Why was the manna changed to them into everything in the way of food that they fancied?" It is deduced that it was so, since in their complainings the only things they felt a longing for, in the way of food, were fish, melons, cucumbers, leeks and onions, which they remembered eating in Egypt, therefore, as they only had manna in the wilderness, the manna must have tasted like all other things but these, at their desire.

§ 88.

And now our soul is dried away, there is nothing at all (Num. xi. 6). They said: "The manna will remain in our bellies and will not come out in the draught, and so it will kill us. Is there a man born of a woman [1] who does not discharge what he eats?" They (the disciples) said to R. Shimeon: "And how do you explain Deut. xxiii. 14?" [2] He replied, What the kings and the pedlars of the nations sold them, they discharged, but the manna they never discharged, for it is said (Ps. lxxviii. 25): "Man did eat the bread of *Abirim*," which means, the manna was a food which assimilated itself to the *limbs*.[3]

There is nothing at all save this manna to look upon. And the manna was . . . as the colour of bdellium. Dost thou think that the same who said this, said that? (*i. e.* that these last words about the manna were also uttered by the Israelites?) [No]! The Israelites said: *There is nothing at all save this manna to look upon*, and God appeals to all those who come into the world,[4] saying: "Come and see why these people murmur against me! *The manna is like coriander seed and the appearance thereof as the appearance of bdellium!*" Namely, like the bdellium of the Garden of Eden [of which it is said, Gen. ii. 12]: "*And the gold of that land was good, there is* BDELLIUM." [5]

[1] Cf. Matt. xi. 11: "Among them *that are born of women* there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

[2] Which shows that the manna could not have had that effect.

[3] *Abirim*—"angels" = *ēbarim*—"limbs" (play on words). Cf. Conybeare, *Myth, Magic, and Morals*, p. 232.

[4] Cf. John i. 9.

[5] The manna was the food of Paradise. This idea about the Manna is also suggested by Sellin, *Der Israelitische Prophetismus*, and A. Jeremias, *Das A. T. im Lichte das alten Orients*.

And ground it in mills. But it never went into mills! From this we see that it was transformed into a substance which *could* have been ground.

Or beat it in mortars. But it never went into mortars! It shows that it was transformed into a substance which *could* have been beaten in mortars. Are we to understand that it was transformed only into these kinds? Whence do we know that all the forty years that Israel spent in the wilderness, no woman was in need of any spices, and that she also used the manna for cosmetics? Because it says: "*And ground it and* BEAT it." [1] And again (Deut. i. 7): *Forty years was the Lord thy God with thee and thou didst not lack* ANYTHING.[2]

And they boiled it in pots. But it never went into pots! It was transformed into a substance which *could* have been boiled in pots. Are we to imagine that it was transformed into these kinds only? Is there a suggestion that it was transformed into any kind of food which is *gathered in the field*? Yes, for it says: "*And gathered it.*" It is like unto a man who says: "I want to eat grapes"; or "I want to eat figs." [3]

R. Shimeon says: "Why did not the manna come down on Israel once a year? In order that their hearts should be turned to their *Father which is in heaven.*[4] Here is a parable. Unto what can it be likened? It is like unto a king who decided to supply his son with food once in a year, for the whole year. The son did not meet (receive the countenance of) his father, except at that time when he received from him the allowance (*i. e.* once a year). Then the father changed

[1] *Dakah* is used of spices.
[2] "Anything," not even spices!
[3] The expression "it is like unto a man who says" in this connexion is archaic. The idea is: if a person had a special fancy for grapes, the manna tasted like grapes, etc.
[4] Cf. Matt. v. 10 f.

his mind, and decided to feed his son once a day. (Thus the son became more dependent upon his father for his daily sustenance.) And the son said: 'If I shall meet my father once a day, it is enough'[1] (*i. e.* to see his father is more to him than food or independence). So in Israel: a man having five boys or girls, would sit and keep watch, saying: 'Woe unto me! perhaps the manna will not come down to-morrow and we shall die of starvation! May it be Thy will that it *should* come down.' And thus their hearts were turned to heaven."[2] Similarly, R. Dosthai ben Rabbi Jose[3] says: "Why did not God create hot springs in Jerusalem like unto those in Tiberias? In order that none should say to his neighbour: 'Come, let us go up to Jerusalem [to the feast]! For if we should go there only to have *one* bath, it would be enough (reason for the journey).' In such cases the pilgrimage would not have any value, since the motives for it would not have been pure (single-minded)."[4]

§ 90.

And Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families (Numb. xi. 10). R. Nehorai used to say: "This suggests that when Moses told the people to 'separate themselves from incest' they were sorry."[5]

[1] Cf. Matt. x. 25; John xiv. 8.

[2] Cf. the fourth petition in the Lord's Prayer, and Mekilta (Amsterdam ed., p. 32). R. El'azar of Modi'im (1st century) said: "He who has enough food for to-day and yet says: 'What shall I eat to-morrow,' belongs to those who are of little faith."

[3] R. Jose is probably a corruption of R. Jannay.

[4] The keeping of any commandment loses most of its value if it is performed without the right intention or from impure motives.

[5] *I. e.* the peculiar expression, which could mean "the people were weeping *for* their families," suggests their unwillingness to give up their immoral connexions; cf. Mark x. 5 and parallels.

§ 91.

And Moses said to the Lord: Wherefore hast thou dealt ill with thy servant and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight that thou layest the burden of all this people on me? Have I conceived all these people? Have I brought them forth?—When did He speak to him thus? [1] In that hour when He said to him: *And now go lead this people, as I said to thee* (Num. xi. 11, 12).

But this passage does not prove much! [2] [But the charge of God to Moses is to be found in the following:] it says (Ex. vi. 13): "And the Lord spake to Moses and Aaron and commanded them *concerning Israel.*" He said to them: "Know that they (the Israelites) are very troublesome, and you must take this [burden] upon yourselves: they will curse you and throw stones at you." [3]

I am not able to bear all this people alone, for it is too heavy for me, and if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand (Num. xi. 14). It is because the Holy One showed Moses all the punishments which he would bring upon them, [therefore these words]. R. Shimeon used to say: "Here is a parable. Unto what can it be likened? It is like unto one who accompanied his sons to their execution. He said to the executioner: [4] 'Kill *me*, before thou killest my children!' [5] (not as it said concerning Zedekiah, Jer. lii. 10).

[1] When did God tell Moses that he will have to carry their burden?

[2] Lit. "still the word hangs on what [it ought not] to hang on."

[3] Cf. our Lord's charge to the twelve, Matt. x. 16 ff.

[4] Speculator.

[5] R. Shimeon had no scruple in comparing God to an executioner! Cf. Luke xii. 46, and my note in Canon Ragg's Commentary on St. Luke (Westminster Commentaries). Also Luke xix. 2.

So Moses said to God: "If that is what will happen to my people, better *kill me;* it is better for me that thou shouldest kill me first, so that I should not see the sorrows which will come upon them."

§ 92.

And the Lord said to Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel (Num. xi. 16). Because Moses said: "I cannot carry BY MYSELF all the burden," therefore God said to him, "I have fulfilled thy petition.'

Gather UNTO ME. [That means], "Let there be a *Sanhedrin* dedicated to me." For wherever we read the words "to *me*" it implies something permanent.[1] Of the priests we read (Ex. xxviii. 41): "And they shall serve *me*"; of the Levites, "The Levites should belong *to me*" (Num. viii. 14); of Israel, "*Unto me* are the children of Israel slaves" (Lev. xxv. 15).

Of the earth it says: "And the earth belongeth *to me.*"

Of the first-born it says: "Every first-born belongeth *to me.*"

Of the Temple it says: "Thou shalt make *me* a sanctuary."

Of the Altar it says (Lev. xx. 24): "Make *me* an altar."

Of the oil of the anointing it says (Ex. xxx. 31): "Oil, etc., *to me.*"

Of the kingdom it says (1 Sam. xvi. 1): "A king *unto me.*"

Of sacrifice (Num. xxviii. 2): "An offering *unto me.*"

[1] Lit. "it stands for ever." The institution of the Sanhedrin is thus based on our passage.

Thus, wherever it says "*to me*," it is to be an institution which is to remain for ever and ever.

Of the elders of Israel. Not in one place nor in two [we find] that God honours [1] the elders.[2] And wherever thou findest "elders" mentioned, there [thou findest that] God himself honours them, *e.g.* Ex. iii. 16; iv. 29; xxiv. 1, 14; Lev. ix. 1.

R. Shimeon ben Joḥai says: "Whence [do we know] that also in the future (Messianic kingdom) God will honour the elders? From Isa. xxiv. 23: 'When the Lord shall reign in Zion *and to* all his *elders honour* (*glory*).' It does not say: 'His messengers,' 'His prophets,' but 'His *elders*.' Now if *God* (Who said the world should be and it was) so honours the elders, must not *we* (flesh and blood) honour them?" Thus thou also findest that God has more sorrow over *one* elder than over the whole of Israel, as it is said (Isa. xlvii. 6): "*I was wroth with my people, I have polluted* (*ḥolallti*) *my inheritance*"; God, as it were, was "*sick*" over Israel,[3] but concerning the elders, it goes on to say, "*Upon the ancient His yoke was very heavy.*" [4]

Whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people. "Thou must *know* whether they have been chosen by Me."

To be the elders of the people. This suggests that no

[1] Lit. "divides honour."

[2] Elders = Scribes; cf. Bacher, *Ag. d. Tannaiten*, i. 265.

[3] This seems to be the underlying thought. Ḥolallti = ḥolē-"sick" or *maḥalti*: "I have forgiven them," *i.e.* for the ill-treatment of my people. The text is corrupt.

[4] God feels the sorrows of the "elders" more intensely than those of the rest of His people! The first part of the verse is taken as referring to Israel: their sorrow made God "sick" (or He has forgiven their enemies for causing it them); the last part, because of the word "elder" (ancient), refers to the "elders," whose sorrow is almost unbearable for God to endure. For the phrase "more sorrow over one," cf. Luke xv. 7.

man sits in the assembly [1] below (on earth), unless he sits [also] in the assembly above (in heaven),[2] so that [after he has been called "from above"] people proclaim his praise and say: "That man is good and pious and worthy to be a sage" (*i. e.* a member of Sanhedrin).[3]

And bring them unto the tent of meeting. He (God) said to him (Moses): "Persuade them with words first! Say unto them words of praise: 'Blessed are ye that ye have been chosen,' and then say unto them words of blame [concerning Israel]: 'Know, that they are troublesome and tiresome, [ye have been chosen] upon condition that ye should take it upon yourselves to be cursed and stoned by them.' The condition I made with *you*, I make with *them* also." [4]

And they shall stand there WITH THEE. Bring them in *with thee* unto the tent of meeting and all Israel will treat them [with great respect], fear and trembling, and honour, as they treat thee, and will say: "Beloved are these (the elders) to enter with Moses to hear '*the word*' out of the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He!" [5]

[1] Academy.

[2] *I. e.* when one had been elected to become a member of the Sanhedrin, it is a proof that he was called from above, "Vox populi vox Dei." The idea of the Holy Spirit controlling the "Church's" Councils is implied here. "The assembly below and the assembly above" has become a fixed term, and is often used, especially in mystical writings. Probably Eph. iii. 14: πᾶσα πατριὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς, is an echo of this phrase.

[3] Cf. *P. Ab.* iii. 13: "He in whom the spirit of his fellow-creatures takes delight, in him the Spirit of God takes delight."

[4] "The disciple is not above his Master," Matt. x. 24.

[5] *I. e.* the reason for the elders being recognised and respected by the people is the fact that they enter the tent together with Moses.

§ 93.

And I will come down and speak with thee there (Num. xi. 17).

This is one of the ten "comings down" of God which are mentioned in the Torah.[1]

And I will speak with *thee*. With *thee*, and not with *them*.

And I will take of the spirit which is upon thee and will put it upon them. What was Moses like unto in that hour? He was like unto a candle which was put into a candlestick from which many candles were lighted and yet its light was not diminished. So also was Moses's wisdom not diminished [by the imparting of his spirit to the elders].

And say unto the people, Sanctify yourselves, against to-morrow (*hithqoddeshu*). [Which means], "prepare yourselves for *punishment*" (cf. Jer. xii. 3; xxii. 10; Joel ii. 15).

Because you have rejected the Lord who is in your midst. God said to Israel: "What caused you to enter into these things?[2] My Shekina which I have placed[3] in your midst! For if I had removed my Shekina from you, you would not have entered into these things (text evidently corrupt; the underlying sense seems to be either that the reason why God is *punishing* them is because He has sent His Shekina to dwell among them, and if God did not punish them the nations

[1] The other nine are described in *Ab. de R. Nathan*, ch. xxxiv, and in *P. de R. Eliezer*, ch. xiv.

[2] Complaining against Me.

[3] This differentiation of the Shekina from God is of doctrinal interest as more often the former is identified in Rabbinic literature with the Deity. One could easily say of the Shekina: "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, being of one substance with the Father, who for Israel's sake came down from heaven . . ."

would say that He was pleased with Israel, notwithstanding their sin, and His Name would be profaned; or: the reason why they *sinned* was because 'familiarity breeds contempt.')"

§ 95.

And Moses said: The people among whom I am are 600,000 *footmen* (Num. xi. 21). R. Shimeon ben Joḥai says: "R. Akiba used to explain these words in one way, and I in another; and my words [seem to be] more suitable than my master's. His explanation of the words: 'Shall flocks and herds be slain for them to suffice them?' is: even if thou shouldest bring to them all the flocks and herds, will they be sufficient? But I say: Did they murmur because they had no flesh to eat? Does it not say that when they left Egypt '*much flocks went out with them*'? (Ex. xii. 38). But, perhaps you might say that they had eaten them in the wilderness? But it says (Num. xxxii. 1): *And the sons of Reuben had much cattle!* But the real explanation is: they only looked for a pretext to separate themselves from God. *If all the fish were gathered together for them.* 'Even if thou bringest them fish to eat, they would murmur.' Did not a brook follow them in the wilderness [1] and provide them with fat fish more than they needed? But they looked for a pretext to separate themselves from God." Another explanation is this: because God showed to Moses the succession (lit. "order") of the punishments which would come upon them,[2] he said to Him: "My Lord,[3] is it right

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. x. 4.
[2] Namely, in the whole history of Israel; cf. above, § 91.
[3] I cannot find any parallel in Rabb. literature to such a direct appellation of God.

that Thou shouldst give them to eat and then kill them? Does one say to a donkey: 'Hallo! Here is a heap (kor) of barley for thee, and then (when thou hast eaten it) we will cut off thy head'? Does one say to a man: 'Have a talent of gold and go to hell'?" God replied: "Well, what then? What advisest thou?" He said to Him: "I will go and persuade them!" He said: "As thou standest here, I tell thee, they will not listen!" Then came Moses and said to them: "*Is the hand of God too short? Behold He smote the rock and it brought forth water*," etc. (Ps. lxxviii. 20). They said, "This is to be a compromise (between God and ourselves)! He has no power to give us what we demand!" [1]

Eldad and Medad (Num. xi. 26–29).

R. Shimeon said: "Eldad and Medad remained in the camp, because, seeing that Moses chose elders they thought to themselves: 'We are not worthy of such distinction!' and went and hid themselves. God said to them: 'Because you have made yourselves small, therefore I will make you greater than all the seventy elders.'" [2] Therefore it says: "*And they prophesied and did not continue*," in connexion with the seventy elders (*i. e.* they prophesied only for the time being and then they ceased); but of Eldad and Medad it says: "They *prophesied* in the camp," which means: they prophesied until the day of their death. And what was the substance of their prophecy?—"Moses is dying and Joshua will lead Israel into the land."

[1] *I. e.* they were not convinced, but were sarcastic about the inability of Moses (and God) to give them substantial help.

[2] Cf. Matt. xxiii. 12, and parallels; also *Mekilta* (Amst. ed., p. 47): He who is humble will cause the Shekina to dwell among men, as it is said (Isa. lxvi. 2): "With him that is poor and of contrite spirit," etc. Again it says: "The spirit of the

§ 96.

And THE YOUNG MAN ran and told Moses (v. 27). Some say it was Joshua, as it is said: "And his servant Joshua the son of Nun was A YOUNG MAN." R. Shimeon says: "It could not refer to Joshua; for he is mentioned in the following verse." [1]

My Lord Moses forbid them.[2] He (Joshua) said to him: "My Lord Moses, *destroy* [3] them (make an end of them). These men have brought me bad news!" [4] Others say it means: "Bind them with chains and fetters" (cf. Jer. xxxvii. 18).[5]

§§ 99–106.

Miriam's Complaint against Moses (Num. xii. 1–16).

§ 99.

And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses. Wherever we find the word "*dibber*"—speak—[in Scripture], it always means something harsh (Gen. xlii. 30; Num. xxi. 5). On the other hand, the word "*amar*" (say) always expresses something gentle (Gen. xix. 7; Num. xii. 6).

And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses.[6] This

Lord is upon me" (Isa. lxi. 1). Again: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit" (Ps. li. 17). But he who is self-righteous (haughty of heart) causes the [holy] land to be defiled and the Shekina to be removed. The self-righteous is, like idolatry, an abomination before God. See also the chapter on humility in my *Hasidism*.

[1] Lit. "behold, it says: And Joshua, etc., so the first one was not Joshua."

[2] *Kelaem.*

[3] A play on words.

[4] *I. e.* Joshua, instead of rejoicing over the prophecy that he will succeed Moses in leadership, was more concerned with the bad news of the coming death of his master which they were supposed to have prophesied.

[5] A play on words.

[6] Lit. "and Miriam spake and Aaron."

suggests that, although they both spoke against him, Miriam started first (lit. "opened the word"). For Miriam was not used to speak in the presence of Aaron, except when circumstances demanded. The same is true of Baruch and Jeremiah (cf. Jer. xxxvi. 2).

And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses. How did Miriam know that Moses had neglected his conjugal obligations? [1] Because she saw that Zipporah, his wife, took no care for her personal appearance, as is the manner of women. Miriam said to her: "What is the matter with thee that thou neglectest thy appearance?" She replied: "Thy brother does not mind!" Thus Miriam knew, and she told it to her brother and they both spoke against Moses. R. Nathan says: "Miriam was standing beside Zipporah when the young man ran and told Moses [that Eldad and Medad were prophesying]. When Zipporah heard that, she said: 'Woe unto the wives of these men!' [2] And thus Miriam knew, and she told it to her brother, and both spoke against Moses." The inference to be drawn from this is: If Miriam, who did not intend to disparage her brother, but, on the contrary, spoke out of her great respect for him, and because she intended that the commandments of God (Gen. i. 28) should be fulfilled, and then talked it over with Aaron only, was thus punished, how heavy will be the punishment of him who speaks disparagingly of his neighbour, with intention, and causes him to disregard the law of propagation, and speaks evil of him in the presence of others! There is a similar inference: If King Uzziah, who did

[1] The duty of propagation, being the first commandment to man in the Pentateuch (Gen. i. 28), is considered to be the most important of all commandments. It is suggested that Miriam and Aaron blamed their brother for neglecting this duty.

[2] Their husbands, having become prophets, will, like Moses, become indifferent towards their conjugal obligations.

not intend to magnify himself, and did not seek his own honour, but that of his Creator, was so punished,[1] how much more heavily will *he* be punished, who intends to magnify himself, and seeks his own honour and not the honour of his Creator!

§ 100.

And they said: "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only with Moses? (Numb. xii. 2). Did not He also speak to the fathers (the Patriarchs), and yet they did not neglect (separate themselves from) the commandment of propagation! Has He not spoken also with us? And yet we have not thus withdrawn ourselves."

And the Lord heard it. This suggests that there was no third person (except God) present, but they spoke it between themselves. R. Nathan says: "They spoke also in the presence of Moses, as it is said: *And the Lord heard it, and the man Moses was very meek.* Moses suppressed the matter."[2]

§ 101.

And the man Moses was very meek. "Meek" (or "poor") in the spiritual[3] sense (lit. "in his knowledge" = consciousness). Thou sayest, "poor in spirit," but perhaps it means "poor in health"?[4] It says (Numb. xxi. 34): "And THOU shalt do to him as thou *didst to Sihon king of the Amorites*," [which means that] Moses himself[5] came upon Sihon and killed him, upon Og and killed him.[6]

[1] Cf. 2 Chron. xxvi. 16–21.
[2] Because he was humble.
[3] Cf. Matt. v. 3.
[4] Lit. "meek (or poor) in body." It seems probable that the difference between Matthew and Luke (vi. 20) is founded on similar considerations.
[5] Because of the singular "*thou*."
[6] Which shows that Moses must have been a giant.

Very meek (or "poor"), which means "poor in spirit." Thou sayest so, but perhaps it is to be taken literally?[1] It says (Ex. xi. 3): *And the man Moses was very great* (*i. e.* wealthy). [As a matter of fact] we find that the two tablets were made at Moses' own expense, and they were made of sapphire, as it is said (Deut. x. 1): God said to Moses, "Hew thee (*i. e.* at thine own expense) two tablets of stone LIKE UNTO THE FIRST"; and in another place it says (Ex. xxxii. 16): "And the tablets were the *work* of God"; and it says (Ex. xxiv. 10): "a paved WORK of a SAPPHIRE STONE." The similarity of expression suggests identity of material.

Above all men that were upon the face of the earth. But not above the Patriarchs.[2] R. Jose says: "Also above the Patriarchs; 'above all *men*' merely excludes the ministering Angels" (he did not exceed them in humility).

§ 102.

And the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the door of the tent (Num. xii. 5). God's ways are not like the ways of man. When a king goes out to war, he is accompanied by *many* warriors, but in time of peace he goes forth with few companions; when God goes forth to war, He starts alone, as it is said (Ex. xv. 5): "*The Lord is a Man of War;*" but when He manifests Himself in peace-time, He is accompanied by thousands and myriads of Angels (cf. Ps. lxviii. 18).[3]

[1] "Poor in Mammon."

[2] In *Mekilta*, p. 32 (Amst. ed.), they are considered sinless: "As the desert is devoid of everything, so was there neither sin nor iniquity in the first Fathers."

[3] Cf. end of § 42. The suggestion is that in this case God came down by Himself to *fight* for His servant Moses against his critics!

And called Aaron and Miriam and they both came forth. Why did not Moses join them? In order that the Israelites should not say that Moses was included with them in the anger of God (cf. ver. 9). Another explanation is that this passage contains a lesson in behaviour, for when two persons are engaged in a conversation and a third person comes to whom one of the two wishes to speak, he will not say to the one he does not want, "Please go," but will rather try to attract the attention of the one he wants, and signal to him to come to him, when delicacy of feeling will show the other one that it is time to retire.

Yet another explanation is that Moses did not wish to be present to listen when God censured Aaron. And still another interpretation is that God did not call Moses to join them because He did not wish to praise him in his presence.[1] R. El'azar ben Azaryah [2] says: "We find that it is right to proclaim a *few* of a man's virtues in his presence; for God spoke to Noah and said: 'For thee I have seen *righteous* before Me in this generation' (Gen. vii. 1); but when He spoke in the absence of Noah, He said: 'Noah was *righteous, perfect* in his generation'" (Gen. vi. 9).

R. Eliezer, the son of R. Jose the Galilean,[3] says: "Even in relation to God we should not, in addressing Him, enumerate all His Divine Attributes, for, we find

[1] And on this occasion God wanted to praise Moses.

[2] 1st and 2nd centuries. Priest and scribe. For some time head of the Academy of Yabneh, in place of Rabbi Gamaliel II. One of his sayings was: "He whose wisdom exceeds his works, to what can he be likened? To a tree whose branches are many, but whose roots are few, and the wind cometh and plucketh it up and overturneth it upon its face. . . . But he whose works exceed his wisdom is like unto a tree whose branches are few, but whose roots are many, so that even if all the winds of the world were to blow upon it, it could not be stirred from its place." *Pirke Aboth*, iii. 22. (Cf. Matt. vii. 24–27.)

[3] First half of 2nd century.

that it says (Ps. lxvi. 3): Say to God: 'How awful are Thy works.'" [1]

§ 103.

And he said, Hear, I pray ye (na), my words (Num. xii. 6). "Na" means "please." If *God* (in speaking to human beings) uses such gentle language, how much more should we! R. Shimeon ben Joḥai says: "'Hear my words' suggests that they (Miriam and Aaron) were about to interrupt the Almighty, and He, checking them, said, in effect: 'Wait until I have ceased speaking.' Here is, then, a scriptural basis for the rule that no man should break in upon the speech of his brother." [2]

If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream. Not so is my servant Moses! He is faithful in all my house.

He is faithful in all my house.[3] Not more so than the ministering Angels. R. Jose says: "Even more than the ministering Angels." [4]

With him do I speak mouth to mouth, i. e. "mouth to mouth" I instructed him to separate himself [for the time being] from his wife.

In sight means in the sight of *the word.*[5] Thou sayest, "in the sight of the word," but perhaps [it means actually] in the sight of the Shekina? It says (Ex. xxxiii. 20): "Thou canst not see My face, for no man can see Me and live." R. Akiba says: "'*Man*' [in that passage] is to be taken literally and '*live*'

[1] But in speaking *about* God, *many* of His Divine Attributes may be mentioned, *e. g.* "*the great, mighty, etc.*"

[2] Cf. *Pirke Aboth*, v. 10.

[3] It appears that this was understood to mean that Moses was a *persona grata* in the Divine household.

[4] Cf., on the other hand, Heb. ii. 6; iii. 6.

[5] Note the personification of the "Logos."

suggests that even the 'living ones,' the ministering Angels, [cannot see God]."

R. Shimeon the Temanite [1] says: "I do not wish to detract from the words of R. Akiba, I only desire to *add* to them. '*Man*' refers to humanity, and '*live*' includes the 'holy living creatures' [2] and the ministering Angels. R. El'azar ben R. Jose [3] says: "Not only do they not *see* Him, but they do not even know where His place is." How does R. Eliezer explain the words, *No man can see me and live?*—While man is *alive* he cannot see [the Shekina], but in the hour of *death* he can see. Similarly also (Ps. xxii. 21): "All they that go down to the dust shall *bow before Thee and he whose soul is not alive.*" [4]

And not in riddles. God said: "Ye should not think that I speak to Moses in the same manner that I speak to the [other] prophets, namely in riddles and parables, as it says (Ezek. xvii. 2): Make a riddle and utter a parable."

Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses. In having spoken against *My servant Moses, ye spoke against Me.*[5] Here is a parable. Unto what can it be likened? It is like unto a king who had a steward [6] against whom the people spoke. The

[1] Beginning of the 2nd century. [2] Cf. Ezek. i. 5.

[3] (ben Halaphta) 2nd century.

[4] *I. e.* if in the moment of death they bow down to God, it shows that they can see Him. "They that go down to the dust" and "he whose soul is not alive," *i. e.* dying persons.

[5] Cf. John v. 23. See also *Mekilta* (Amst. ed., p. 176): Why is the Holy Land called the Land of Canaan? Because God said to the sons of Heth (identified with Canaan): "Ye have honoured my beloved (Abraham, cf. Gen. xxiii. 6), I will call the land by your father's name." But particularly p. 25: And they believed in the Lord and Moses His servant (Ex. xiv. 31). "He who believeth in the faithful shepherd (Moses) is as if he believeth in the word of God Himself. . . . But he who speaketh against the faithful shepherd speaketh against God."

[6] ἐπίτροπος, cf. Gal. iv. 2.

king said unto them: "Ye spoke not against my servant, but against me. And if ye should say: 'The king does not know of the steward's doings,' that is an offence which is greater than the first." [1]

§ 104.

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them and He departed (Num. xii. 9). Only after proclaiming their sin did he decree their "excommunication." [2] Now, if God reveals His anger against men (flesh and blood) only after having proclaimed their sin, the more must man postpone the expressing of his anger against his fellows until he has told them their sin.[3] R. Nathan says: "Why did God first proclaim their sin and then command their excommunication? In order that they should not say like Job (x. 2): '*Tell me why Thou strivest against me.*'"

§ 105.

And the cloud was removed from over the tent (Num. xii. 10). Here is a parable. A king said to the tutor of his son: "Chastise [4] my son, but not until I have gone away," for the father is full of pity for his son.[5] Now, if God, even in the hour of His anger, is full of pity *for the righteous*, how much more so in the "acceptable time"? (Isa. xlix. 8).

R. Judah ben Bathyra says: "Any one who says that Aaron was [also] smitten with leprosy, will have to give

[1] *I. e.* if they should say that the king is deceived about the character of his representative, they would offend the king himself.

[2] The technical word for excommunication, *Nidduy*, is used here.

[3] We must not cherish animosity, but give our brother a chance to justify himself.

[4] Cf. παιδεύσω αὐτόν, Luke xxiii. 16.

[5] So God departed (the cloud was removed), in order not to be present at the punishment of Miriam and Aaron!

an account [1] [in the world to come for cherishing such an idea]. When God has covered it up concerning him,[2] wilt thou uncover it? Also, he who says [3] that Zelophehad was the man who collected wood on the Sabbath Day (cf. Num. xv. 32–36), will have to give an account; for if God has covered it up concerning him, wilt thou uncover it? He also will have to give an account who says that Akabya ben Mahalalel [4] was excommunicated."

And Aaron turned unto Miriam, and behold, she was leprous. These words suggest that each time he looked at her, the leprosy broke out afresh.

And Aaron said to Moses, "O my lord, lay not, I pray thee, this sin upon us." What he meant was: "if we did it unintentionally,[5] forgive us, [and do not consider it] as though we had done it intentionally."

Let her not, I pray thee, be as one dead. As a dead body in a tent defiles [all that are in it], so also a leper defiles by contact. Aaron said: "I do not know what to do with my sister; I cannot lock her up, for then *I* shall be defiled; neither can I proclaim her defiled, nor can I declare her clean." By the way, we learn from this that Aaron was the first to deduce from Scripture the law that no man (*i. e.* priest) can examine the leprosy of his own relations.

And Moses cried to the Lord, saying: O God, I beseech Thee, heal her, O God, I beseech Thee. This passage

[1] Cf. Matt. xii. 33.

[2] *I. e.* as Scripture says nothing concerning Aaron being punished with leprosy, we have no right to think that perhaps he was thus punished.

[3] Cf. Num. xxvii. 3: "Our father died in his own sin," which suggests that Zelophehad committed some particular sin, and R. Akiba identified him with the Sabbath-breaker whose name is not mentioned.

[4] Cf. § 7. This last passage is attributed in *Mishna Eduyoth* iv. 6 to R. Jehuda ben Ilai, the pupil of R. Akiba.

[5] Namely, in thinking that Moses was wrong in abstaining from his marital duties.

teaches us right behaviour [in relation to God and man]: our petitions should always contain words of suppli cation.

Heal her, O God, I beseech Thee. Why did not Moses make a *long* prayer? In order that the Israelites should not say, "Ah, he prays long because she is his sister!" Another explanation: In order that Israel should not say: "His sister is in distress, and he stands here and makes long prayers!" Another explanation: Is not this *Moses*, who, when he prays, God answers his prayer? Cf. Job xxii. 28; Isa. lviii. 9 (the righteous has only to say *one* word and it is accepted by God, and therefore it was not necessary for him to pray long).[1]

The disciples asked R. Eliezer:[2] "What is the longest prayer a man may pray?" He replied, "He should not pray longer than Moses, who said, '*And I fell before the face of the Lord forty days and forty nights*'" (Deut. ix. 18) (*i. e.* this is the limit which no prayer should exceed). [And they asked him]: "What is the shortest prayer a man may pray?" He replied, "No prayer should be shorter than Moses' prayer: 'Heal her, O God, I beseech Thee.' There is a time for short prayers, and a time for long ones" (lit. "there is an hour to shorten and an hour to prolong").[3]

§ 106.

And the Lord spake unto Moses saying: If her father had spit in her face[4] *should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut up without the camp seven days* (Num. xii. 14).

[1] Cf. Matt. vi. 7 and 8.

[2] ben Hyrkanos, 1st and 2nd centuries.

[3] Cf. *Mekilta*, pp. 22 and 24 (Amst. ed.): God said to Moses: "My children are in distress and thou makest long prayers!"

[4] "Spit in the face" = treating with contempt. Cf. Ephr. Syrus in his twentieth metrical hymn for the evening.

R. Aḥay ben Josiah[1] says: "If her father had put her to shame, she would be locked up for seven days, so we might deduce by inference that when God had put her to shame she would be shut up for *fourteen days*. But 'it is sufficient that the result derived from an inference be equivalent to the law from which it is derived.'"[2]

[*And Miriam was shut out*] *seven days and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.* We can see from this[3] that "according to the measure a man measures, it is measured to him."[4] Miriam waited for Moses for *one* hour,[5] as it is said (Ex. ii. 4): *And his sister stood afar off;* therefore God kept the Shekina, the Ark, the Priests, the Levites, Israel, and the Clouds of Glory, waiting for her sake.

[Another instance.] Joseph took possession of the bones of his father (for burial), although there was none among his brethren greater than he.[6] Whom have we greater than Joseph, who was found worthy (as a reward) to be taken care of (*i. e.* his body) by Moses himself? And again, Moses took possession of the bones of Joseph (cf. Ex. xiii. 19), although there was none in Israel greater than he. Who is greater than Moses?

[1] Second century.

[2] *I. e.* the law transferred to the major must never surpass in severity the original law in the minor from which the inference is drawn. Thus we might have expected that the time of her exclusion from the camp should be more than seven days, since *God's* disfavour is of more consequence than that of a human father. Nevertheless, Scripture says: "Let her be shut out of the camp for seven days," which is just as long as she would have felt herself to be humiliated if her father had treated her with contempt. This is regarded as the chief Biblical prototype of inference from minor to major.

[3] Lit. "to teach thee."

[4] A fixed phrase in Rabbinical literature (cf. also Matt. vii. 2).

[5] For one hour = a short time.

[6] Yet he did not consider it an indignity to arrange the burial.

And of him it is said: "And He (God Himself) buried him in the land of Nebo" (Deut. xxxiv. 6).

R. Judah says: "If it had not been written in Scripture it would not be possible to utter;[1] for it says, '*Get thee up unto Mount Nebo*' [and die in the mount (Deut. xxxii. 49)]. Now, Nebo belonged to the portion of the sons of Reuben, as it says (Num. xxxii. 37): 'And the children of Reuben built Heshbon *and Nebo*.' And yet we read that he was buried in the portion of Gad (Deut. xxxiii. 21): 'And of Gad he said . . . in a portion of the lawgiver was he ceiled.'[2] [So there is a contradiction, but it means] that Moses' body was lying on the Hand of God four miles within the part of Reuben, stretching out into the part of Gad![3] And the ministering Angels proclaimed his (Moses') praises, saying: 'He did the righteousness of God and his judgments with Israel' (Deut. xxxiii. 21)."

And not only is it the case with Moses, but [with] all the righteous, as it is said (Isa. lviii. 8): "Thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall gather thee up."[4]

§§ 107–109

The Law about Meal-offerings and Drink-offerings (Num. xvi. 16)

§ 107.

All that are homeborn shall do these things after this manner (Num. xv. 13). What is the implication of the word *these?* In Lev. xxxiii. 25, we read: "Ye shall not offer unto the Lord that which is bruised, etc.,

[1] Because of the anthropomorphism.

[2] Interpreted: Moses, the lawgiver was buried (ceiled (Heb.) = shut up) there.

[3] This seems to imply that the body of Moses was enormously enlarged after his death.

[4] *I. e.* God Himself will "gather" thee (in the sense of burying).

neither from a *stranger's* hand shall ye offer," therefore it says here emphatically "these;" namely *these* animals (with blemishes) thou mayest not accept from them (the Gentiles) for sacrifices, but thou mayest accept from them animals *without blemish.*

Now that we gather that a Gentile may bring a burnt-offering, we might argue:[1] As the status of a Gentile is equal to that of an Israelite in regard to burnt offerings, so, perchance, in regard to libations?[2] For that reason it says here, "All that *are homeborn* shall do these things:" only an Israelite may offer libations, but not a Gentile. Does it imply that his (the Gentile's) burnt-offering requires no libations with it? [No], for it says: "After this manner."[3] Hence the sages said: "A Gentile who sent up his burnt-offering (to the Temple in Jerusalem) from a far country,[4] but omitted to send with it the necessary wine or oil for libations, the community (of Israel) must supply them."

§ 108.

And if a stranger[5] *will sojourn*[6] *with you . . . as ye do, so shall he do* (Num. xv. 14). "Will sojourn" may mean only a heathen Gentile who has but recently become a proselyte (viz. since the entrance of Israel into Canaan). But how do we know that he who has [already] become a proselyte (in Egypt) is also included?[7] Because it says, "Among you throughout your generations."

And will offer an offering made with fire, i. e. blood-offerings. Thou sayest, it means blood-offerings, but

[1] By "Hekesh."
[2] *I. e.* that his libations may be accepted in the Temple.
[3] *I. e.* every burnt-offering must be accompanied by libations.
[4] Lit. "from the country of the Sea."
[5] Ger = proselyte.
[6] The imperfect (= future, according to Tradition).
[7] In the law about sacrifices.

maybe it means only a meal-offering? It says: "*As ye do, so shall he do*"; as 'ye' [may bring] a blood-offering, so may the proselytes.

Rabbi [1] says: "As Israel entered the covenant by three rites: circumcision, immersion (prob. founded on Ex. xix. 10), and sacrificial atonement (Ex. xxiv. 5–8), so also do the proselytes [enter by the same rites]." [2]

§ 109.

As ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord (Num. xv. 15). Why is this emphasised? Because in another passage it says (Ex. xxviii. 38): "*And it (the plate) shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that it may bear the iniquity, etc., that he may be accepted before the Lord;*" which means that the plate of the high priest brought atonement to *Israel* (had a sacramental value), therefore it says here: "*As ye are, so shall the sojourner be before the Lord,*" in order to show that it also brought atonement to the proselytes.

§ 110.

The Heave-offering.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying: Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them: In your coming unto the land whither I will bring you, when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up a heave-offering unto the Lord (Num. xv. 17–20).

R. Ishmael says: "Scripture uses a different expression in this place, differentiating the law about the heave-offering from all other laws dependent upon entry

[1] Rabbi Jehuda, the Prince, the Editor of the *Mishna*. The style of the following important passage makes it probable that Rabbi Jehuda was not the originator of it, but that it goes back to a much earlier date.

[2] A heathen requires circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice, in order to become a full member of the Jewish commonwealth.

into the Land; for while everywhere else it says, 'and it shall be that *when ye shall come*,' or 'when *the Lord thy God will bring thee*,' here it says, 'beboakem'—'in your coming,'[1] that we may know that as soon as the Israelites entered into the Land, they were immediately subject to the law of heave-offering."[2]

Whither I bring you. From this expression (whither) we learn that foreign fruit is subject to the law of heave on entering the (Holy) Land.[3] On the other hand, concerning Palestinian fruit going abroad[4] [there is a difference of opinion]. R. Eliezer says: "They are subject thereto." R. Akiba says: "No." R. Judah says: "Foreign fruit imported into the land of Israel is, according to R. Eliezer, free from the law of heave, for it says: 'when ye shall eat of the bread *of the land*,' which excludes foreign fruits. But according to R. Akiba it is subject, because it says: 'Shammah,' 'whither' (*i. e.* whether the fruit is Palestinian or foreign, as long as it is there, in the Land); on the other hand, Palestinian fruit which has been exported is, according to R. Eliezer, included, because it says: '*It shall be that when ye eat of the bread of the land*'; whether it is eaten in the land or abroad, as long as its origin is in the land." R. Akiba says: "It is not subject, because it says 'whither,' which means, in Palestine itself must thou give the 'heave,' but not when the fruit has gone abroad."

Ye shall offer up a heave-offering unto the Lord. Why

[1] *I. e.* immediately on arrival.

[2] *Teruma.* In the widest sense it refers to every "heave" due to the Temple, but in Rabbinic tradition it stands especially for the priestly dues of the best of the field- and tree-products. Cf. especially *Mishna Terumoth*; Joseph. *Ant.* iv. 4, 4. Also Philo, *De praemiis sacerdotum* 1 (*Mang.* ii. 233).

[3] *I. e.* it does not depend on the place of origin, but on the place of consumption.

[4] Lit. "from here to there."

this repetition? Because the previous words, *Ye shall offer up a cake for an heave offering*, do not specify the quantity, therefore it says here: "Ye shall *give* to the Lord an heave-offering," which means: it must be such an amount as could be called "*a gift*" to the priest. From this we can deduce the rule that the minimum which a private individual has to give as an heave-offering [1] is a twenty-fourth part of the whole, and for a public baker it should be a forty-eighth part; because "a man's eye is good and a woman's eye is evil," [2] therefore the minimum which is prescribed for her [3] is a forty-eighth part. Hence the sages said that a householder who made a feast for his son has to assign a twenty-fourth part of the dough to the priest as "heave," and a woman who prepares bread and sells it in the market must give a forty-eighth part of her dough.[4]

§§ 111–112.

Propitiation for Sins of Ignorance

(Num. xv. 22–31)

§ 111.

And when ye shall err and not observe all these commandments (Num. xv. 22).

This refers to idolatry. Thou sayest, "to idolatry," but maybe it refers to any Commandment of the Law? When it says (v. 24): "That if *it* has been hidden from the eyes of the community, and done unwittingly;" Scripture singles out one Commandment as being something unique, so it must be idolatry. When, also, it

[1] This refers to Ḥalla, the "heave" due to the priest from bread which was to be given not in flour, but in dough. Cf. *Mishna Ḥalla*, ii. 5.

[2] Cf. Matt. vi. 22, 23. *I. e.* a man is generous and a woman is mean.

[3] Women usually baked bread for sale.

[4] Cf. Romans xi. 16; εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀπαρχὴ ἁγία, καὶ τὸ φύραμα.

says here: "When ye shall err and not observe *all these Commandments*," a comparison is made between *all* Commandments and the *one* Commandment, namely, as he who transgresses against *all the Commandments* of the torah, throws off the yoke [of God], and destroys the covenant [of God with Israel, or with Abraham], and "uncovers faces in the torah,"[1] so the transgressor of *the one Commandment* ▪ referred to in the passage is also one who breaks the yoke, and destroys the covenant, and treats the torah irreverently; and this must refer to an idolater, as it is said in connexion with idolatry, "to break his *covenant*"; and "covenant" is always connected with the Law, as it is said: "These are the words of the *covenant*" (Deut. xxviii. 69).[3] Rabbi says: "The 'all' here and the 'all' there[4] are akin to one another: as there it is connected with idolatry, so also here."

Which the Lord spoke to Moses. How can it be inferred that he who is given over[5] to idolatry, denies all the Ten Words (Decalogue)? Because it says [here, in connexion with idolatry]: "*which the Lord spoke to Moses*," and in connexion with the Decalogue it also says (Ex. xxi. 1): "*And the Lord spoke* all these words, saying; 'I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other Gods but Me.'"

Whence is it further to be inferred that he who worships idols denies all that was commanded to Moses (not only the Decalogue, which God spoke directly)?

[1] *I. e.* treats the words of the torah irreverently.

▪ Contained in this verse.

[3] All these, rather involved, Scriptural proofs are based on the vague phrasing of the text. In short, why this special ordinance about a sin committed in ignorance? A special sin must be meant, a sin which is equal to the breaking of *all* the commandments, namely *idolatry*.

[4] In the Deut. passage.

[5] Lit. "professes."

Because it says: "*All that the Lord God has commanded through Moses.*" He also breaks that which was commanded to the prophets, because it says: "*From the day when the Lord commanded*" (*i. e.* all Commandments are included). Also that which was commanded to the Patriarchs, because it says: "For your generations." And when did the Holy One, blessed be He, begin to give Commandments to the Patriarchs? Since the time when it is said concerning Adam: "And the Lord *commanded* Adam." Thus, Scripture intimates that he who professes idolatry denies the Ten Words; the Commandments given through Moses; the Commandments given through the Prophets; and the Commandments given to the Patriarchs. And he who *denies* idolatry, professes the whole torah.[1]

If it be done unwittingly, etc., *the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the house of Israel.* How is it to be inferred from this that if one of the twelve tribes was prevented from bringing the Sacrifice it frustrated the Atonement? Because it says: "And the priest shall make atonement *for all the congregation of Israel, then shall they be forgiven.*"[2] Are we to understand that sacrifice as a means of atonement is efficacious for sins committed *wilfully* as well as unintentionally? [No,] because it says: "For it was in *error*" (a sin-offering is brought only for sins com-

[1] *I. e.* even if he does not actually keep the rest of the Law, he is a Monotheist. This most probably refers to a Gentile. The importance of this passage is obvious.

[2] Cf. similar references to the solidarity of Israel in *Mekilta*, pp. 40 and 42 (Amst. ed.): "As the lamb, when *one* of its members is in bad condition, all the other members feel it, so it is with Israel: if *one* of them has been killed, all the rest feel the sorrow, but not thus are the nations of the world." "God says: If *one* of them (of Israel) falls, it is to Me as though they all fell . . . *one* of them taken away is to Me of the same importance as the whole work of Creation." Cf. 1 Cor. xii. 26 and parallels.

mitted in ignorance, *not for wilful sins*). R. Eliezer says: "[*On the contrary*], this passage implies that the sins of the community *as a whole* (in contrast to the sins of the individual), even when done wilfully, are as if they were done unintentionally [and are atoned for by sacrifice]."

And it shall be forgiven. This (the masculine verb) implies only men. How then do we know that it refers to women also? Because it says: "*And it shall be forgiven to the whole congregation of the children of Israel.*" [1]

And to the stranger (proselyte). As Israel is specified, the proselytes must be specially mentioned. It is always the case in Scripture when Israel is specified, the proselytes must be expressly included (otherwise *we* would exclude them).

§ 112.

And if one person sin unwittingly (Num. xv. 27). This is to exclude intentional sin [from sacrificial atonement].

And the priest shall make atonement for the soul that erreth. The sins in his hand (*i. e.* his sins) have caused him to come to the "house of sin-offering" (unintentional sin is a revelation of sub-conscious sinfulness).

When he sinneth unwittingly. This (the repetition) is to exclude [from the necessity of a sacrifice] the "niceties" of idolatry (*i. e.* acquiescence in contemporary heathen customs, not directly idolatrous).[2] For otherwise we might have deduced by inference that those should also be included; for if the niceties of

[1] "There is neither man nor woman" in relation to God's forgiveness.

[2] To prevent any possible inducement to idolatry, acts such as kissing and hugging an idol were prohibited.

other Commandments, which, compared with idolatry, are "light," man is obliged [to bring a sacrifice in case of unintentional transgression], much more so should it be the case in connexion with idolatry.

And it shall be forgiven him. *Perfect* forgiveness, like all forgivenesses (mentioned) in the torah.

Ye shall have one law for him that is homeborn among the sons of Israel and for the stranger. Why this repetition? Since we should otherwise have inferred that as Gentiles are put upon equal terms with the Israelites with regard to idolatry,[1] they are also their equals in cases of unintentional idol worship; but now we learn that only the Israelites bring [a sacrifice] in such a case.[2]

That doth aught unwittingly. R. Judah ben Bethyra says: "[This additional expression is to include] any sin which, if committed intentionally, is punished by 'Karet,' and if done in ignorance requires a sin-offering, as in the case of the sin of idolatry."

But the soul that doeth aught with a high hand (intentionally); this is he who treats the torah irreverently,[3] like Manasseh the son of Hezekiah.

The same blasphemeth the Lord. For he (Manasseh)

[1] The first of the "seven precepts of Noah," supposed to be already binding upon mankind at large before Abraham and outside of his family, so that the Gentile world is as much responsible for the sin of idolatry as Israel; cf. Rom. i. 18–26.

[2] We should otherwise have judged thus: the Israelites have been forbidden to worship idols and the Gentiles have also been prohibited this; now, when the Israelites have unintentionally committed the sin of idolatry, they must bring a sacrifice, so also must the Gentiles. But this emphasis: "*homeborn among the sons of Israel*" excludes Gentiles (who have not become members of the Jewish Commonwealth). From this, as from other Midrashic passages, we see clearly that a Gentile, unless he becomes a full member of the Jewish Commonwealth, even if he gives up idolatry, is not obliged to keep the Law: the difference between Pharisaic teaching concerning Gentiles and Pauline refers only to full membership.

[3] Lit. "who uncovers the face of the torah."

used to sit and discuss scandalous homilies before God.[1] Said he: "He (God) had nothing else to write in the torah than, 'And Reuben went in the days of harvest and found mandrakes in the field, etc.' (Gen. xxx. 14); and He had nothing else to write than, 'And the children of Lotan were Kor and Heman'!" (Gen. xxxvi. 22).[2] Concerning him it is clearly stated in tradition: [3] "*Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother, thou slanderest thine own mother's son; these things hast thou done and I kept silence, thou thoughtest that I was as thyself*" (Ps. l. 20, 21). God said unto him: "Dost thou think that the ways of God are like the ways of man? I will reprove thee."

Isaiah [also] came and explicitly stated in tradition: "*Woe* unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope" (Isa. v. 18); [which means]: the beginning of sin is like one strand of a spider's web, but its end is like unto a cart rope, (meaning, either that the will is weakened by small offences, or that *one* sin is followed by many). Rabbi says: "He who fulfils *one* Commandment for its own sake (not from selfish motives) [4] should not rejoice merely because of that particular Commandment,[5] for the end will be that this *one* good deed will be followed by many others; and he who breaks *one* Commandment should not merely be perturbed because of that sin, for the end will be that that *one* sin will be followed by many others. *One* good deed will bring forth another one and *one* sin is followed by another.[6]

[1] *I. e.* he discussed topics with the object of finding fault with God.

[2] *I. e.* foolish genealogies, cf. above § 78 on the γενεαλογιαι in the Pastoral Epistles.

[3] The prophetic and hagiographic books are often so designated, in contrast to the Pentateuch.

[4] "For its name," cf. "in the name of a prophet" (Matt. x. 41).

[5] That he was able to keep it.

[6] Cf. *Pirḳe Aboth*, ii. 4.

He blasphemeth (*megaddeph*) *the Lord.* R. El'azar ben Azaryah says: "It is like unto a man saying to his neighbour: 'thou hast scooped out (the first meaning of *gadef*) the dish and lessened it (the dish itself).'" [1] Isi ben Akabya [2] says: "It is like unto a man who says to his neighbour: 'Thou hast scratched out the whole dish and left nothing in it.'" [3]

The soul shall be utterly cut off. "*Cut off*" means ceasing to be (total annihilation is implied).

From among his people. But the people will be at peace (the whole people is not responsible for the *intentional* idolatry of the individual).

Because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken His Commandment. "*Despised the word of the Lord*" refers to a Sadducee; "and has broken His Commandment"—to an Epicurean.[4] Another explanation:—"*Because he has despised the word of the Lord,*"—is he who treats the torah irreverently; "*And hath broken His Commandment*" is he who breaks the covenant of the flesh (*i. e.* who opposes circumcision). Hence R. El'azar of Modi'im [5] says: "He who profanes the holy things (*the Sanctuary*), and despises the *festivals*, and breaks the covenant of Abraham our father (*circumcision*), even if he has in his hand many good deeds, is worthy to be thrust out of the world" (*i. e.* of the world to come).[6] If he says: "I accept the whole

[1] As well as worshipping Creation instead of the Creator, an idolater impairs, so to speak, the Divine Nature itself.

[2] 2nd century.

[3] An idolater makes, as it were, the Creator non-existent.

[4] The Sadducee was a theoretical heretic, *e. g.* trying to show from Scripture that there was no resurrection; the "Epicurean" probably refers to the light-minded Hellenists.

[5] 1st century.

[6] It is very probable that we find here a polemic against St. Paul, as of none of the others could it be said that, although "he profanes the Sanctuary" (*Quadashim* here can only mean that); "despises the festivals"; thinks lightly of circumcision,

torah, with the exception of *this* word," of him it is said: "For he despised the word of the Lord." If he says, "The whole torah was spoken by the mouth of Holiness,[1] and this word Moses himself said," he despises the word of the Lord.

Another interpretation: "*For he has despised the word of the Lord.*" R. Meir[2] says: "This is he who studies [the word of God], but does not teach others." (He "despises" the word in not being eager to spread it.) R. Nathan says: "It is he who does not consider the words of the torah at all" (the indifferent). R. Ishmael says: "This passage speaks of idolatry, because it says, 'he despises *the word* of the Lord,' which means, he despises the *first word* (Commandment) which was spoken to Moses direct, by the Mouth of the Power,[3] namely, 'I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other gods before me'" (Ex. xx. 2).

That soul shall utterly be cut off (hikareth tikareth, infinitive with imperfect). The first word refers to *this* world, and the second to *the world to come.*[4] Thus R. Akiba. R. Ishmael said to him: "[Do you deduce from hikareth tikareth]? You might as well add the words in the preceding verse: 'and that soul shall be cut off,' and say that there are three 'cuttings off' from three worlds!" [It is a fanciful exegesis], for the torah speaks in the tongues of men.[5]

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yet "has in his hand many good deeds." In this case this would be the only non-Christian source which makes allusion to the work and teaching of St. Paul; cf. Acts xxi. 28; Rom. iii. 21; vii. 6; x. 4; 1 Cor. vii. 19; Col. ii. 16.

[1] God. [2] 2nd century.

[3] = God. The Decalogue was spoken directly by God, other commandments through Moses. Perhaps ἐξουσία, Mark i. 27, has the same meaning.

[4] *I. e.* a Jew who has committed the sin of idolatry will die before his time and will have no part in the world to come.

[5] *I. e.* it is just an idiom, and we cannot deduce from this what is not explicitly contained in the text. There is hope even for the dolater.

His iniquity shall be upon him. Death atones for all sinners, except idolaters. It is similar to the expression (Ezek. xxxii. 27) "their iniquities shall be *upon their bones.*" [1] Perchance this also refers to an idolater who *repents?* It says here: "*His iniquity* shall be upon him," but not when he repents. (When he repents his sin is no more.) Similarly it says (Deut. xxxii. 5): "*They have dealt corruptly with him and they are not his children, it is their blemish,*" which means, when their blemish is still in them (when they have not repented of their sin) they are *not* His children, but when their blemish is not any more in them, they *are* His children.[2]

R. Ishmael says: "*His iniquity shall be upon him*"? What are we to learn from these words? Since it says: "*He visits the sins of the fathers upon the children*" (Ex. xx. 5), we might think that these words refer also to idolatry, therefore it says here: "*His iniquity shall be upon him;*" the iniquity hangs upon *him* (the idolater), but is not visited upon his descendants of the third and fourth generations.[3] R. Nathan says: "It is a good sign if a man is punished by God [immediately] after his death. If he died without being lamented, or without being buried, or if a wild animal devoured him, or if rain-storms came upon him—it is a good sign, because it means that he has been punished already [in this world] soon after his death." [4] And, although there is no direct proof from Scripture for this, there is a suggestion: "*At that time . . . they shall bring out*

[1] *I. e.* they will not be atoned for by death, their sin will remain "on their bones."

[2] Founded on the keri and kethib of "lo" in that verse.

[3] Because the idolatry of an Israelite is not anything hereditary, but the wilful act of the individual, and it would be unjust of God to visit this sin on his descendants.

[4] The fact that he died such a death, without being honoured with a proper burial, is a sign that God has already punished him and he will not be punished further.

the bones of the Kings of Judah . . . and they shall spread them before the sun, etc." [1]

Said R. Shimeon ben El'azar : [2] " With this argument I have proved the fallacy of the books of the Sadducees,[3] who say that the dead [will] not live [again] ; [4] for said I to them : it says : '*That soul shall utterly be cut off, his iniquity shall be upon him,*' which last words must mean that the *soul* will have to give an account in the Day of Judgment." [5]

§ 113.

The Sabbath-breaker (Num. xv. 32–36).

And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness they found a man gathering sticks upon the Sabbath Day. Scripture relates this incident to show up Israel's lack of piety : they kept only *one* Sabbath, the second they profaned. *And they who found him gathering sticks, brought him unto Moses* (v. 33). Why is it repeated? It implies that the man had been warned beforehand concerning works of this kind that are prohibited on the Sabbath. Hence the rule concerning all those chief works, which, according to the torah, are not to be done on the Sabbath, that a warning must be given first [if the person breaking them is to be punished].

R. Isaac [6] says : " It is not at all necessary [to deduce it from this passage]. It stands to reason (we can deduce it by inference) : if idolatry, which is such a

[1] It is difficult to find in this quotation any proof for the saying of R. Nathan.

[2] 2nd century.

[3] Kutheans.

[4] This is the technical term for Resurrection.

[5] The words in Heb. literally mean : " *its sin is in it,*" viz. *in the soul,* after it has been cut off, *i. e.* died.

[6] 2nd century.

grave sin, is only punished after due warning, much more so must it be with other transgressions."

(The rest of the text is defective.)

* * * * * *

And they put him in ward. This suggests that all criminals who are to be executed must first be put in ward.

Because it had not been declared what should be done to him. But does it not say "all those who profane the Sabbath should surely die" (Ex. xxxi. 14)? The meaning is: Moses did not know by what *manner of death* he should die, until he was told directly by the mouth of Holiness.[1]

And the Lord said to Moses: The man shall surely be put to death. This is a law for all generations.

All the congregation shall stone him. This means: he should be stoned in the *presence* of the whole congregation. Thou sayest that it means in their presence, but perhaps it is to be understood literally (that they should all stone him)? It says: "The hand of THE WITNESSES shall be on him first to kill him."[2]

And the whole congregation brought him without the camp and stoned him to death with stones. From here it can be inferred that criminals who are to be executed should be put to death outside the court.[3]

And stoned him to death with stones. Here it says "with *stones*," and in another passage it says, "and they stoned him with *a stone*" (Lev. xxiv. 23); how should these passages be reconciled? The house of stoning (the stoning-place) was twice the height of a man. One of the witnesses pushed him (the criminal) from behind, so he fell face downward. He was then

[1] God.

[2] See, about the ancient practice, W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 285.

[3] Cf. Matt. xxvii. 33; Heb. xiii. 13.

turned on his back. If he died from this fall, it was sufficient; if not, the second witness took the stone and dropped it on his heart. If this caused death, it was sufficient; if not, he was stoned by the whole congregation of Israel, as it is said: "*The hand of the witnesses should be the first to kill him and the hand of the whole people last*" (Deut. xiii. 10). Thus *both* passages are in harmony with one another.

As the Lord commanded Moses. He (Moses) said to them: "Stone him!" and they stoned him. "Hang him!" and they hanged him. Concerning the hanging, we should know nothing, were it not for Deut. xxi. 22: "*If there be found in man a sin which causes death, and he is executed, then he shall be hanged on a tree.*" Thus R. Eliezer. R. Ḥidka [1] said: "I had a fellow student, one of the disciples of R. Akiba, and he said: 'Moses knew that the penalty for him who gathers wood on the Sabbath was to be death, but he did not know what manner of death he should die.'" [2]

[1] Cf. above, § 68.

[2] Here follows the phrase of which R. Ḥidka seemed to have been very fond: "Good things are brought about through the agency of good men," etc.

§ 115.

The Law concerning Tassels (Fringes).

Num. xv. 37–41. Cf. Matt. ix. 20; xiv. 36; Mark vi. 56; Luke viii. 44.

And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Speak unto the children of Israel and bid them that they make them tassels on the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put on the tassel of each border a cord of blue (Num. xv. 37–38).

Women are also included in this law. But R. Shimeon says it does not apply to them, because every positive Commandment which is dependent upon time (*i. e.* which is not to be fulfilled at *all* times) does not refer to women. According to him, it is a general rule: every positive Commandment which is dependent upon time applies to men, but not to women; to the ritually fit, but not to the ritually unfit. R. Jehuda ben Baba [1] says: "The sages have particularly exempted a woman's wrap from the duty of fringes; even a woman's cloak [2] they only included because the husband sometimes wraps himself in it.

Why are the fringes called *zizith?* Because the Lord skipped (*hiziz*) [3] over the houses of our fathers in Egypt [to save them]; as it is said (Cant. ii. 8): "*The Voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.*" [4]

R. Ḥanina ben Antigonos [5] says: "Of him who fulfils the law of fringes it is written: 'in those days, ten

[1] 1st and 2nd centuries, known as "the Ḥasid." He was killed by a Roman soldier.
[2] Tallith, similar to the Roman pallium, worn by both sexes.
[3] A play on words.
[4] Applied allegorically to God hastening to deliver Israel from Egypt.
[5] Date uncertain.

men of all the languages and tongues of the nations shall take hold of the fringe (k'naph) of a Jew' (Zech. viii. 23); and of him who keepeth not the commandments of zizith it says (Job xxxviii. 13); 'Take hold of the ends (k'naph) of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it.'" [1]

R. Meir says: "It is not written, 'and ye shall see *them*' (viz. the fringes), but 'ye shall see *him*'; which suggests that to him who keeps this commandment it is reckoned [2] as though he had received the Face of the Shekina; [3] for the blue [4] of the fringes is like unto the colour of the sea, and the colour of the sea is like unto the colour of the firmament, and the colour of the firmament is *like unto the throne of the Divine Glory;* as it is said (Ezek. i. 28): 'And above the firmament was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone.'"

And ye will see it and remember all the Commandments of the Lord and do them. This suggests that whosoever keeps this Commandment (of the fringes) it is counted to him as though he had kept *all* the Commandments. Now, if he who keeps this *one* Commandment has such merit, who can estimate the merit of him who actually keeps all the Commandments!

That ye follow not after your own heart [*and your own eyes after which ye go a-whoring*].

After your own heart, means heresy (minuth), according as it is said (Eccl. vii. 26): "And I find a thing more bitter than death, even *the woman whose heart* is

[1] A play on words.

[2] By God. Lit. "they reckon (impute) to him." Cf. Luke xii. 20: *τὴν ψυχήν σου ἀπαιτοῦσιν ἀπὸ σοῦ.*

[3] This expression is used to avoid the anthropomorphism: "seeing *God*."

[4] Teḥoleth, Assyr. takiltu.

snares and nets, and whose hands are bands." [1] And it also says (Psa. lxiii. 12): "*And the King shall rejoice in God [for the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.*" [2]

After your eyes, refers to fornication, according as it is said (Jud. xiv. 3): "And Samson said, '*take her for me, for she pleaseth my eyes.*' "

After which ye go a-whoring. This is idolatry, as it is said (Jud. viii. 33), "*went a-whoring after the Baalim.*" R. Nathan says: "[These words mean] that a man should not drink from his own cup and at the same time think (or make use) of the cup of his neighbour." [3]

Another explanation. "*That ye follow not after your own heart and your eyes.*" It shows that the eyes follow the heart.[4] Perhaps the heart follows the eyes? [5] But think! Are there not blind who commit all sorts of abominations?

R. Ishmael says: "*That ye follow not after your own heart,*" etc., complement the words (Eccl. xi. 9): "Rejoice, young man, in thy youth, and walk according to the ways *of thy heart.*" Should he walk in the right way or in any way he likes? [Here is the answer]: *Follow not after your own heart.*

That ye may remember and do all my Commandments. This makes thinking (remembrance) of equal importance to doing.[6]

And ye shall be holy to your God. The holiness

[1] "Heresy," whether as gnosticism or Christianity, is considered an unclean thought, and comes under the heading of the Commandment "Keep thee from every evil thing," Deut. xxiii. 6.

[2] Speak lies = heresy.

[3] *I. e.* the words include adulterous thoughts. Cf. Matt. v. 28.

[4] *I. e.* the first impulse to sin comes from the heart, evil thoughts lead the eyes to behold evil.

[5] *I. e.* the sight of evil defiles the imagination.

[6] The right mental attitude towards the Law is as obligatory as the doing of it.

[which results from the keeping] of *all* the Commandments is meant.[1] Thou sayest thus, but perhaps it means that holiness results from the mere keeping of the commandment of the fringes?[2] But the context speaks of the holiness [which is attained] by the keeping of all the Commandments. Rabbi says: "[Just the opposite!] It means 'the holiness of the fringes,' for in the words: '*Ye shall be holy*' (Lev. xix. 2), we have already a reference to the Commandments as a whole, and it would be superfluous to mention it again here, so this refers to the holiness resulting from the fringes. Thus we learn that [the fulfilling of the law of the] fringes adds holiness to Israel."

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt. What connexion has the going out of Egypt with this? So that no one should say: "I will use [for the fringes] dyed wool or wool dyed with callainum, which is purple-blue, and who would know anything about it?"[3] [Therefore it says]: *I am the Lord your God which brought you out of Egypt*; "Know what I have done to the Egyptians, who did their works in secret and I have proclaimed them openly!" Now, if in regard to the attribute of Divine Severity, which attribute is not abundant, we find that, whatever sin be committed in secret is revealed by God openly, how much more so is it with the Divine attribute of good (reward), which is abundant.[4]

[1] *I. e.* the fringes remind us to keep all the commandments, by means of which we attain holiness.

[2] Perhaps the wearing of the "fringes" in itself produces holiness?

[3] Lit. "Who would proclaim it openly?"

[4] Cf. the similar phraseology in 2 Cor. iii. 7–11; and especially Rom. v. 15. Here the meaning is: the goodness of God revealed in rewarding the good deed cannot be less than His justice, and if he reveals every sin committed in secret, much more can it be expected of Him in regard to good actions. Cf. Matt. vi. 4–7; Luke viii. 17.

Another explanation. Why, at every performance of a Commandment, must we have *the Exodus* in our thoughts? Here is a parable. It can be likened unto a king whose friend's son was taken prisoner. The king redeemed him, but expressly upon the understanding [1] that he should become his slave, so that at any time, if he should disobey the king, the latter could say: "Thou art my slave!" As soon as they came into a country, the king said to him: "Put my sandals on for me! Take my clothes to the bath-house!" That son (of the king's friend) began to protest. And the king took out the bill of sale and said to him: "Thou art my slave!" So when the Holy one (blessed be His Name!) redeemed the descendants (the seed) of Abraham, his beloved (friend), he did not redeem them with the view that they should be [His] sons, but [His] slaves, in order that when He commands and they do not obey, He could say to them: "Ye are my slaves!" And as soon as they went out into the desert, He began to issue some light commandments, and some weighty ones, for instance, the laws concerning Sabbath, and incest (grave ones); the fringes, and the phylacteries (light ones). Then the Israelites began to protest. He said unto them, "Ye are My slaves! For this reason have I redeemed you, that I might give decrees and ye should keep them." [2]

I am the Lord your God. Why is it repeated? Has it not already been said: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the Land of Egypt"? In order that the Israelites should not say, "Why has God given us commandments? Is it not in order that we

[1] Lit. "In regard to," εἰς ὄνομα, Matt. x. 41, has the same meaning: "taking regard of Me."

[2] Cf. Rom. vi. 22; viii. 12; John viii. 31–37; Gal. iv. 1–7, 21–37.

should keep them and receive a reward? In that case let us *not* keep them, let us *not* be rewarded."[1] It was in like manner that Israel said to Ezekiel: ("Certain of the elders of Israel came *to inquire* of the Lord *and sat before me,*" Ezek. xx. 1). They said unto him: "Ezekiel, when a master has sold his slave, has not the latter passed out of his former master's control?" "*That which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, (namely) that ye say, we will be as the heathen. . . . With a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm and with fury will I rule over you*" (*ibid.*, 32, 33). *With an outstretched arm,* means with the sword (cf. 1 Chr. xxi. 16). *With fury,* means famine. [God said]: "After I have brought these three punishments upon you, one after the other, then will I rule over you, *against your will!*"

I am the Lord your God. A reward is attached to every commandment in the torah. Come and learn [this] from the commandment concerning the fringes! Once upon a time there was a man who was very careful about this commandment. He heard that there was a harlot in a mercantile city[2] who took 400 gold pieces for her reward. He sent her 400 gold pieces and she appointed him a time. When his time came, he went and sat at the door of her house. Then came the maid and told her: "That man to whom thou hast given an appointment, behold, he sits at the door of the house." Said she: "Let him come in." When he went in, she had made up seven beds of silver and one of gold, and she was on the upper one, and between each bed there were seven benches of silver and the upper one was of gold. When they were about to commit sin, his four fringes appeared to him like four witnesses

[1] Why should we be punished if we do not keep the Law? God ought only to withhold the reward, and nothing more!

[2] Lit. "in the sea towns."

and whipped his face. At once he withdrew and sat himself on the floor. She also withdrew and sat herself on the floor. She said to him: "By the Capitol of Rome! I will not let thee go until thou tellest me what blemish thou sawest in me." Said he to her: "By God![1] I have not seen any blemish in thee; in the whole world there is no beauty like unto thine. But the Lord our God gave us a light commandment[2] and He wrote twice concerning it, *I am the Lord your God, I am the Lord your God*, [which means]: 'I am the Lord your God' who will *reward;* 'I am the Lord your God who will *punish.*'" She said to him, "By God, I will not let thee go until thou write for me thy name, the name of thy city, and the name of thy college, where thou studiest the torah." And he wrote down his name, and the name of his city, and the name of his Rabbi, and the name of his college. She divided her money into three parts; one-third she gave to the [Roman] Government, a third to the poor, and a third she took with her, and came and stood in the college of R. Ḥiyya.[3] She said to him: "Master (Rabbi), make me a Jewess!"[4] Said he to her, "Hast thou thine eye upon one of the disciples?" (Is that thy motive, then thou canst not be received.) She took out the writing. Said the Rabbi to him: "Stand up, take possession of thy bargain! Those mattresses which she spread for thee in unrighteousness (illegality), she will now spread for thee in righteousness (legality). This is her reward in this world; and in the world to come, I know not how much!"[5]

[1] Lit. "By the worship [of the Temple]." Cf. Matt. xxiii. 16–22.
[2] The fringes.
[3] 2nd century, in Tiberias.
[4] Lit. "a proselyte."
[5] Cf. for the last sentence Mark x. 30.

§ 116.

The Rank and Rights of Priests and Levites
(Num. xviii. 1–7).

And the Lord said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood (Num. xviii. 1).

R. Josiah says: "If the priest has sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice in the proper manner, but has not known the particular purpose of the sprinkling; and if he did in like manner with the fat of the sacrifice; how can we prove from Scripture that [all] the priests 'bear the iniquity' [for this forgetfulness]? [1] Because it says: '*Thou and thy sons* shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary.'"

R. Jonathan says: "If the priest took possession of the flesh (belonging to him), before the sprinkling of the blood; of the breast and the thigh, before the offering of the fat; do [*all*] the priests bear his sin with him for this? But it says: '*Thou and thy sons shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.*'"

We find that the Divine decree against the sons of Eli was finally sealed [2] because they dealt contemptuously with holy things [3] (cf. 1 Sam. ii. 15–17). We also find that the decree against the inhabitants of Jerusalem was finally sealed by God because of the same sin, as it is said (Ezek. xxii. 8): "thou hast despised my holy things."

[1] Every sacrificial act must be performed with the right intention. The whole Priesthood is responsible for the acts of the individual priest. This principle of the solidarity of the priesthood is of importance.

[2] A technical term for Divine retribution.

[3] Things pertaining to sacrifices, *i. e.* they performed their sacrificial duties carelessly.

And they (the Levites) shall keep thy charge, etc., only they should not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they nor ye also die (Num. xviii. 3).

R. Nathan [1] says: "[In the expression 'neither they nor ye'] we find a hint in the torah itself for [Levitical] singing [during sacrifices].[2] Afterwards it was explicitly stated by Ezra" (cf. Ezra iii. 10).

R. Ḥananya, son of R. Joshua's brother,[3] says: "It is already suggested by the expression: 'Moses spake and God answered him by a voice'" (Ex. xix. 19).[4]

Only they should not come nigh the vessels, etc.

From this we only know that Levites are prohibited from, and punished for, doing the service belonging to the priests; whence do we know that the priests are not allowed to perform, and are punished if they do the duties of Levites? From the expression "*neither they nor ye.*" Whence [do we know that it is prohibited to Levites appointed for] *one* kind of service to [perform] *another?* Also from the same expression.[5]

Once upon a time R. Joshua ben Ḥananya [6] wanted to assist (in the Temple service) R. Johanan ben Gudgeda.[7] He (the latter) said to him: "Go back! Thou hast already made thyself guilty of death,[8] for I belong to the gatekeepers, and thou to the singers."

[1] In Erukin 11 it is R. Jonathan, which is more probable. He and his colleague R. Josiah were the most famous disciples of R. Ishmael.

[2] The "hint" is found in the fact that the Levites are mentioned together with the priests ("neither they nor ye"), as if the former had something to do with sacrifices. It could only refer to their singing.

[3] Beginning of the 2nd century.

[4] *Y'anenu*—in the sense of "singing" in response. Moses was a Levite.

[5] *I. e.* as priests must keep to their appointed services, so also the Levites.

[6] Famous scribe and Levite, contemporary of Gamaliel I.

[7] Who was also a Levite.

[8] Lit. "in thy soul," *i. e.* against thine own soul.

But thou and thy sons shall keep the charge of the sanctuary and the charge of the altar (Num. xviii. 5).

Observe, how this obliges the Judicial Court (the House of Judgment) of Israel to warn the priests that the Temple Service should be properly carried out, for they (the priests) hold back the [Divine] punishment from entering into the world.[1]

That there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. "*No more*" presupposes that there had been previously occasions when the wrath of God was revealed (for irregularities in the priestly functions). Similarly: "No more flood" (Gen. ix. 11). Compare also Leviticus xvii. 7; Num. xi. 22. So also here: "no *more* wrath," for there was wrath on a previous occasion, as it is said (Num. xviii. 11): "For there is wrath gone out from the Lord."

And, behold, I have taken your brethren, the Levites, from among the children of Israel; to you they are given as a gift to the Lord (Num. xviii. 6).

To the Lord—that is to say, they (the Levites) are given (lit. delivered) to the *Lord*,[2] but not to the priests.

But thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar and within the veil, and ye shall serve. I have given your priesthood as a service of gift, and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death (Num. xviii. 7).

[1] *I. e.* the priests are the mediators of propitiation.

[2] Lit. "to the Name," a very frequent substitute for God (probably based on Lev. xxiv. 11, 16). Dalman is probably right in assuming that our Lord must have used the same designation of God, although there is no suggestion of it in the Gospels. See *Worte Jesu*, p. 150. He is wrong in assuming that, according to Mishna Yoma iii. 8; iv. 2; vi. 2, even the High Priest on the Day of Atonement did not pronounce the Tetragrammaton, but used "the Name." The Mishna, in describing the prayer of the High Priest, substitutes this for Jahwe.

And thou and thy sons . . . for everything of the altar. R. El'azar Ha-kapar Berabi[1] interpreted this in the following manner: "Everything connected with the altar should be done only by thee and thy sons."

Keep your priesthood . . . within the veil. On this expression the sages have based their conclusion that there was a place [in the Temple] behind the veil, where the family records of the priesthood were kept and examined.[2]

And ye shall serve. Are we to understand that the services could be performed anyhow, without any order?[3] [No], because as the gifts given to the priest are to be distributed by arbitration, so also must the service be by arbitration.[4]

As a service of gift I give you your priesthood. This expression shows that there is a similarity between the sacred *gifts* which are consumed by the priests outside Jerusalem[5] and the service [of the priests] in the Temple: as [the priest] must lustrate[6] his hands prior to (sacred)

His father's characteristic sayings were: (*a*) They that are born are destined to die; and the dead to be brought to life again; and the living to be judged (cf. Heb. ix. 27), to know, to make known, and to be known by God (cf. 1 Cor. xiii. 13). (*b*) Envy, lust, and vain-glory take a man from the world (*i. e.* make him lose his soul).

[2] "*Your Priesthood—kehunathkem*—within the veil"! It is probable that the "sages" merely tried to find Scriptural support for what was actually the case.

[3] *I. e.* without any system. Lit. "do I hear mixed?" by any priest, even if a particular service is not allotted to him, *i. e.* out of his turn. Cf. Luke i. 9.

[4] The various services were allotted severally to the priests.

[5] Lit. "in the provinces," *i. e.* those that need not be consumed in Jerusalem.

[6] Lit. "sanctify." It may not be out of place to mention here the fact that, from the point of view of contemporary Judaism, the expression in Mark vii. 2, 5, κοιναῖς (χέρσιν), is impossible. For κοινὸς corresponds to Hebrew "*ḥoll*," which qualifies things (vessels and food) that have not been *consecrated*, but which are *not impure*; it is used also of weekdays in contrast to the Sabbath, but never of persons. LXX always has βέβηλος

service, so, also, must he wash his hands before sacred *food*.

Once R. Tarphon came late to the House of Study. R. Gamaliel [1] said to him: "What has made thee late?" He replied: "I had priestly service [to perform]." Said R. Gamaliel to him: "Are not thy words strange? Is there now any priestly service (the Temple having been destroyed)?" He replied: "Lo, it says: '*as a service of gift I give you your priesthood*,' [which means] the consuming of sacred food (by the priest) outside the Temple is like performing priestly service in the Temple." [2]

Rabbi argued thus: "[This expression] makes the consuming of sacred food outside the Temple equal to Temple service. Perchance also in reference to the 'washing of hands and feet,' since it has to be performed before any Temple Service? There, where both hands and feet are engaged (*i. e.* in the Temple), he must wash both, but where only the hands are used (*i. e.* for food), only these must be washed." Hence we derive the washing of hands [before meals] from the torah itself (it is not a mere tradition of the elders).[3]

And the stranger that cometh nigh shall die (*ibid.*).

[Only if he performed priestly service.] [4] Thou sayest

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for holl. It is missing in *Sin. Syr.*, and seems to be an interpolation.

[1] Gamaliel the second (A.D. 80–115), grandson of Gamaliel I (the teacher of St. Paul).

[2] Terumah, which was exacted on all vegetable products, was given to the priests even after the destruction of the Temple. Terumoth ii. 5, 6; iii. 1; ix. 6. Cf. *Hieron. comment. Ezek.* xiv. 13, 14. The consuming of this was considered by R. Tarphon as of equal importance to priestly service in the Temple, *i. e.* of a sacramental character.

[3] If this deduction originated with Rabbi, *i. e.* Jehuda ha-nasi: A.D. 135, editor of the *Mishna*, it may be a polemic against Mark vii. 8.

[4] But the mere entrance into the sanctuary by a non-priest was not punishable.

thus, but perhaps the words must not be so limited? [1] Harken! if a priest with some bodily blemish (who is therefore prohibited from *serving* in the Sanctuary) is not punished merely for entering therein (although the punishment in that case would not be death),[2] much less could Scripture mean that *death* should be the punishment of a non-priest for merely entering the Sanctuary.[3]

Shall die. Even if he serves in [Levitical] purity. Maybe only when he is defiled? Hear this: if he who merely *enters* [the Sanctuary] in defilement draws on himself the punishment of death, much more so he who in defilement performs a priestly service. (And it would be superfluous to state the fact here.)

Shall die. We find the same expression again in connexion with a false prophet (Deut. xiii. 6); as there death was to be by stoning, so also here. R. Joḥanan ben Nuri [4] says: "The same expression is used here as there (in connexion with adultery, Deut. xxii. 22); as there by strangulation [5] so also here."

§§ 117–119.

The Priest's Dues (Num. xviii. 8–20).

§ 117.

And the Lord spake unto Aaron (Num. xviii. 8).

Might one think that the word [of God] was addressed [directly] to Aaron? [6] [No], for it says (Num. xvii.

[1] Lit. "Perhaps for service or not for service."
[2] But "*kareth*" (untimely death).
[3] It is almost impossible to give a literal translation of the above.
[4] 1st and 2nd centuries. [5] Cf. *Sanh.* 84ª.
[6] Elsewhere (with the exception of Lev. x. 8) instructions to Aaron are imparted through Moses, *e. g.* Lev. viii. 2, xvi. 2, 21; Num. vi. 28; viii. 2.

1, 5) " [And God spake to Moses] . . . to be a memorial unto the children of Israel that no stranger, etc., come near to offer incense, etc." Thus we learn that the Word came to Moses, that he might impart it to Aaron.

Behold, I, even I, (wa-ani hinneh) have given thee that which is kept of the contributions made to me.

" *Wa-ani* " expresses pleasure; " *hinneh,*" joy.[1] Thus R. Ishmael. Said his disciples to him: " Our Master! When it says (Gen. vi. 17): '*Behold, I, even I* (wa-ani hineni), shall bring a flood upon the earth,' are we to understand that there is joy in the presence of God [2] [in the punishing of the world]? ! "

He replied, " [Yes], there is joy in the presence of God, when those who provoke Him to anger disappear from the world," [3] as it is said (Prov. xi. 10): " *When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth, and when the wicked perisheth* [*there is*] *shouting.*" Again it says: " *Thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked, salvation is the Lord's, Thy blessing is upon Thy people* " (Ps. iii. 8). Also: " The Lord ruleth. . . . *The Gentiles have disappeared from the land* " (x. 16). Again: " *The sinners will disappear from the land and the wicked will be no more; bless, my soul, bless the Lord, Hallelujah* " (Ps. civ. 35).

[1] These words always occur in Scripture in connexion with pleasure and joy. Here they mean that God has joy in appointing the priestly dues to Aaron.

[2] Lit. " Place." For the expression " in the presence of God," cf Luke xii. 6: *ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ.*

[3] Cf. *Sifre Deut.* 139*a*. When God judges the peoples, there is joy in His presence, but when He judges Israel, it is as it were, with regret; cf. on the other hand, Mekilta (Shirah): all hymns begin with " Praise the Lord, for He is good," with the exception of the song at the Red Sea, because there was, as it were, *no joy in His presence at the perishing of the wicked* (*the Egyptians*). Or: " The works of My hands (human beings) are sinking in the sea, and ye sing! " Cf. also Matt. xxv. 31–46, and parallels.

I have given thee the contributions—even all the holy things of the children of Israel.

Scripture (= God) made a covenant with Aaron concerning all the most holy things;[1] a decree and a covenant; because Korah stood up against him and contested [his] priesthood. Here is a parable. What can it be likened unto? It is like unto a king who had a minister to whom he made a present of a field, but neither wrote nor sealed (signed) a deed of donation, nor had he entered it in the recorder's office. One day, a certain person came and contested the minister's right to the field. Then said the king: "Anyone who chooses can now deny thy right to the field! Come, I will write out [a deed of donation], I will sign it, and enter it in the recorder's office."—Therefore this section is close to the section about Korah.[2]

The first ripe fruits of all that is in the land . . . everyone that is clean in the house should eat it.

Has not this been said already? (v. 11). [It is repeated] in order to include the daughter of an Israelite (a layman) who is only betrothed[3] to a priest, [namely] that she may also eat Terumah. . . . Once Johanan ben Bag Bag[4] sent (a message) to R. Jehuda.[5] He said unto him: "I hear about thee, that thou hast said in Nisibis[6] that a daughter of an Israelite who is

[1] The priestly dues.

[2] *I. e.* the section about the priestly gifts follows the section about Korah's rebellion, in order to show, as it were, that God had now "signed, sealed, and entered in the recorder's office" the covenant He had already made with Aaron and his descendants.

[3] See p. 20, note 5.

[4] Nothing is known about him. Ben Bag Bag's saying in *P. Aboth.* v. 32 is, "turn it (the torah), and again turn it, for all is therein."

[5] R. Jehuda ben Bethyra.

[6] In the north-eastern part of Mesopotamia, where the latter lived.

betrothed to a priest may eat Terumah." Said he (Jehuda) to him: "Dost thou not agree with me?[1] I am convinced that thou art well acquainted with the intricacies (chambers) of the Law, and yet knowest thou not how to deduce something by inference *a minorii ad majus?* If a Canaanitish[2] slave purchased by a priest can eat Terumah, by means of delivery to her of her purchase money,[3] (although she cannot be considered) to be owned by him (in relation to Terumah,) by means of coition, how much more must the delivery by a priest of the purchase money[4] to the daughter of an Israelite (who can be 'owned' by coition),[5] make her eligible for Terumah! But what shall I do? Lo, the sages have said that a daughter of an Israelite betrothed to a priest is not allowed to eat Terumah until she enters the ḥuppa (baldachin); as soon as she enters the ḥuppa, even before there is coition, she is allowed to eat Terumah, and if she dies, her husband inherits her property."[6]

Every devoted thing[7] *in Israel shall belong to thee* (Num. xviii. 14).

This speaks only of things devoted by (male) *Israelites.* How do we know that it also includes those of proselytes, women, and slaves? Because it says "*everything devoted.*"[8] R. Jose the Galilean says: "Every dedication of a thing without an explicit statement [about the purposes, belongs] to the priests; for it says (Lev. xxvi.

[1] Lit. "and thou, dost thou not say thus?"
[2] *I. e.* pagan. Cf. the "Canaanitish" woman in the Gospels.
[3] She then belongs to the priest's household and may eat Terumah.
[4] Coin of betrothal. [5] Cf. *Mishna Kid.* i. 1.
[6] *I. e.* she is considered his full and proper wife.
[7] Ḥerem means here any object directly dedicated by individual Israelites; cf. Gray on *Num., Int. Critical Commentary,* 229.
[8] By whomsoever.

20) '*as a field devoted, the possession thereof shall be the priest's.*' Perchance even when it was explicitly devoted for Temple repair? It says (*ibid.*, 28), '*every devoted thing is most holy* UNTO THE LORD.'" [1] Jehuda ben Bethyra says just the contrary.[2] R. Jehuda ben Baba says: "Dedications not explicitly stated belong to the priests" (cf. Lev. xxvii. 22). But perhaps even when he explicitly stated "for the Name" (for God)? But it says: *All devoted things are most holy unto the Lord.* R. Shimeon says: "All dedications the purposes of which are not explicitly stated belong to God [3] as it is said," etc.

§ 118.

[The rights of the priests in the first-born (Num. xviii. 15–19).]

Everything that openeth the womb of all flesh [*should be given to the priest*] (Num. xviii. 15).

Are we to understand that also beasts of chase are included? [No], for it says: "Which they bring unto the Lord" (*as a sacrifice*), which excludes beasts of chase.[4] Perchance also animals with blemish are excluded? [5] [No], for it says: "Whether it be *men or*

[1] *I. e.* it goes directly for the Temple repair.

[2] Lit. "dedications not explicitly stated go to Temple repair," because it says: "Everything devoted is most holy, is the Lord's" (v. 29). Perchance also when he explicitly stated "to the priest"? [No], for it says: "As a field devoted to the priest."

[3] Lit. "to the Name."

[4] *I. e.* only the first-born of animals that can be brought as a sacrifice must be given to the priest.

[5] *I. e.* if only the first-born of animals suitable for sacrifice are to be given to the priest, then those with blemish ought to be excluded.

beasts," [which comparison of beasts with men] includes even animals with blemish.[1]

Whether it be of men or beasts.

[The first-born of male beasts are compared with the first-born of men, which means] that only those who are included in the law concerning the first-born of men are included in the law concerning first-born of beasts; consequently Levites (who have not to redeem their first-born males) [2] are also exempt from presenting their first-born beasts. On the other hand, as first-born animals, if born before the time, are excluded, so also among men. Again, as [the redemption-money of] first-born men can be given to [any] priest, at any place,[3] so also with the first-born of beasts; for I might infer from (Deut. xii. 6) "Ye should bring *there* (in the Temple in Jerusalem) *your burnt-offerings and your first-born,"* that even from a long distance a person should be obliged to bring the first-born animal to the Temple (the chosen House). Also, as a male-

[1] *I. e.* as a child, even with bodily blemishes, which would disqualify him for the priesthood, *must be redeemed,* so also a first-born animal even with a blemish belongs to the priest. It is strange that Edersheim (*Life and Times of J. M.*, I. 198) dogmatically states that "*the child* (*the first-born*) *must be free from bodily blemish*"! Burton (*A Short Introduction to the Gospels, 77*) follows Edersheim, and even Box in *The Virgin Birth*, p. 98 ff., makes the same mistake.

[2] This disposes of the early Christian speculations about the Levitical descent of the Blessed Mary, cf. Augustin *contra Faustum*, xxiii. 9 ("*quod patrem habuerit ex tribu Levi*"), also Cap. iv. See also Epiphanius Haereses, lxxviii. 13, where the heretics ask: "How can Mary, who is of Davidic descent, be related to the Levite Elizabeth?"

[3] Some scholars (cf. Löw, *Die Lebensalter in der jüd-Literatur* (1875) find here a direct contradiction to Luke ii. 23–24. But, as Edersheim (*op. cit.* p. 194), Burton (*op. cit.* p. 77) and Box (*op. cit.* p. 99) point out, "the Gospel narrative does not state that the presence of the Holy Family in the Temple was required by the Law; it simply alleges the fact that they were present."

child is nursed for thirty days (before it is brought to the priest), so also with the first-born of animals.

v. 19. *All the offerings of the holy things I have given to thee. It is a covenant of salt* (Num. xviii. 19).

It is a covenant of salt.[1] Scripture (= God) made a covenant with Aaron by means of something (salt) which is not only in itself wholesome but which keeps other things wholesome.[2]

§ 119.

Thou shalt not inherit in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them. I am thy portion and thy inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel (Num. xviii. 20).

Because it says (Num. xxvi. 53): "*To these* (*tribes*) *shall the land be apportioned as an inheritance,*" one might think that all are included: Priests, Levites, Israelites, proselytes, women, slaves, those of doubtful or double sex (androgyni); therefore it says: "And God said to Aaron '*thou shalt not inherit* in their land,' which refers to *Priests;* '*neither shalt thou have any part among them,*' which refers to *Levites;* '*according to the names of their fathers' tribes shall they inherit*' (Num. xxvi. 25), excludes proselytes and slaves; 'according to the number of those that were numbered' (*pikudaw* in singular), excludes those of doubtful or double sex."

I am thy portion and thy inheritance. "At *My table* thou eatest, at *My table* thou drinkest." Here is a

[1] The salt used in connexion with the sacrifices.

[2] For the symbolism of salt, cf. Wellhausen, *Reste arab. Heidentums*, 12, and W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 2nd ed., 270. But the Sifre interpretation seems to underlie Mark ix. 50: "*have salt in yourselves and* [*so*] *have peace with one another.*"

parable. To what can it be likened? [It is like] unto a king who distributed gifts among his sons, but to one of them he gave nothing. He (the king) said: "My son, I have not given thee any gift, but thou shalt eat at my own table and at my own table shalt thou drink." So it says [concerning the priests]: "*I have given it to them for their portion of my offerings made by fire*" (Lev. vi. 17). Again it says: "*They shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire and His inheritance*" (Deut. xviii. 1).

I am thy portion and thy inheritance.

Twenty-four priestly gifts were given to the priests, twelve in the Sanctuary [1] and twelve outside of the Sanctuary. Which are the twelve in the Sanctuary? These are they:—

1. Sin-offerings (Lev. vi. 19).
2. Guilt-offerings (*ibid.* vii.).
3. Communal peace-offerings (*ibid.* vii).
4. The skin of the burnt-offering.[2]
5. That which remains of the log of the oil of the leper (cf. Lev. xiv. 10).
6. That which is left over by the preparing of the *Omer*.[3]
7. The two loaves of bread.[4]
8. The shew-bread.[5]

[1] *I. e.* directly connected with the Temple.

[2] Lev. vii. 8; cf. Philo, *De praemiis sacerdotum* (*Mang.* ii. 235) and *Corp. Inscr. Semit.* I. n. 167.

[3] The Omer of barley offered on the sixteenth day of Nisan (Lev. xxiii. 10–14; cf. *Tos. Demai.* i. 28).

[4] Lev. xxiii. 17.

[5] *Ibid.* The twelve shew-breads had to be renewed every week, and the old ones belonged to the priests (cf. also Jos. *Ant.* iii. 107, and Matt. xii. 4, Mark ii. 26, Luke vi. 4). One half was given to the priests who had finished their weekly service and the other half to those who were starting on their turn (cf. *Sukka* v. 7–8).

9. The remnants of the meal-offering.
10. The gift of thank-offering (Lev. ii. 3).
11. The gift of the breast and the right shoulder (*ibid.* vii. 31, 32).
12. The shoulder of the Nazarite's ram (Num. vi. 9, 20; cf. Lev. vii. 34; Deut. xviii. 31).

And which are the twelve outside the Sanctuary? These are they :—

1. Terumah [1] (Num. xviii. 12, 13).
2. Contributions of Levitical Tithes (*ibid.* xviii. 20, 32).[2]
3. Contributions of Hallah (cf. *ibid.* xv. 17–20; Ex. xliv. 30; Neh. x. 38).[3]
4. Bikkurim (Num. xviii. 13; cf. Neh. x. 36; Deut. xxvi. 2, 10; Rom. ii. 15).[4]

(The first fruits.)

5. The first shorn wool (Deut. xviii. 4).
6. The gifts (cf. *ibid.* xviii. 3).
7. The first-born of men.
8. The first-born of clean animals.
9. The redemption of the firstling of an ass (Ex. xiii. 13; cf. Num. xviii. 15).
10. The Ḥerems.
11. An inherited field (Lev. xxvii. 16, 27).

[1] Exacted on all vegetable produce. It did not need to be brought to Jerusalem, and was contributed even after the Fall of the City (cf. *Bik.* ii. 2 f.; *Terumoth*, ii. 5, 6; iii. ix. 6); cf. *Hieron. Comment. in Ez.* xiv. 13, 14.

[2] Cf. *Bikkurim* i. 3; iii. 1–9; Joseph, *Ant.* iv. 8, 22; Philo, *De Festo Cophini in Tischendorf's Philonea* (1868), 69–71. See also Hochman, *Jerusalem Temple Festivities*, 1–53.

[3] Cf. *Hallah* i. 1; *Edujoth* i. 2; Philo, *De Praemiis Sacerdotum Mang.* 11, 233*b*; Jos. *Ant.* iv. 4, 4.

[4] Cf. Tobit i. 6; Jos. *Ant.* iv. 4, 4. Philo, *De Caritate* (*Mang.* ii. 391), erroneously includes them under tithes.

12. What was illegitimately taken from a proselyte (cf. p. 3).

All these twenty-four privileges were given to the priests.

Not reckoned among these are things which became subject to the law of Terumah through an admixture.[1]

Great was the joy of Aaron on the day when a covenant was made with him in reference to the gifts!

R. Ishmael says: "A popular proverb says: 'It is all for my good that my cow has broken her leg.' It was all to Aaron's good that Korah came and contested the priesthood against him.[2] Therefore this section concerning the priestly dues comes close to the section about Korah."

R. El'azar Ha-kapar says: "How can it be shown from Scripture[3] that the Holy One, (blessed be He) had shown to our father Jacob the (future) Temple, the sacrifices offered (there), the priests administering, and the Shekina departing [from there]?"[4] Because it says (Gen. xxviii. 12): *And he (Jacob) dreamt, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth. And the top of it reached heaven, and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.* There is no dream without an interpretation: "*A ladder set up on the*

[1] *I. e.* when secular grain was mixed with Terumah, which, being prohibited to non-priests, was sold cheaply to priests; cf. *Orla*, ii. 4.

[2] *I. e.* often a small loss bringeth forth great gain. Cf. *Gen. R.* ch. 42. R. Eliezer b. Hyrkanos was ploughing in the field and his cow fell and broke her leg, which made him resolve to leave everything and go to R. Johanan b. Zakkai to study. In *p. Hor.* 48*a* (cf. *Lev. R.* ch. 5), we read of a rich man near Antioch who used to be the host of R. Eliezer, R. Joshua, and R. Akiba, and who lost his wealth. Once, when he was ploughing on the only field left to him, his cow fell into a ditch and broke her leg and a great treasure was revealed in that ditch!

[3] Lit. "sayest thou."

[4] Destruction of the Temple.

earth," that is the Temple; "*the top of it reached to heaven,*" refers to the sacrifices offered there, whose smell went up to heaven. *And behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.* These are the ministering priests,[1] who ascend and descend the steps [of the altar]. "*And behold, the Lord stood above it*" [refers to Amos ix. 1]: "*I saw the Lord standing on the altar.*"

What love had God bestowed upon Israel, that when He calls them by a pet name, He calls them "*priests,*" as it is said (Isa. lxi. 6): "*And ye shall be called the priests* of the Lord."

What love has God bestowed upon the *priests*, that when He calls them by a pet name, He calls them "*ministering angels,*" as it is said (Mal. ii. 7): "*For the lips of the priest keep knowledge, and they seek teaching at his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord of Hosts.*" As long as teaching (torah) cometh out of his mouth,[2] he is like the ministering angels, but if not, he is like a wild animal and like a beast which does not recognise its owner.[3]

Beloved is the torah, for when David, the King of Israel, asked God (to give him something), it was the *torah* that he desired, as it is said (Ps. cxix. 68): "Thou art good and doest good, *teach me Thy statutes,*" [which being interpreted means]: "Thy goodness is exceeding great towards me and towards all those who come into the world. May Thy goodness be ample towards me, and teach me Thy statutes." Again it says (*ibid.* v. 117): "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be saved, and I will have respect unto Thy statutes continually" (which

[1] Cf. the "angels" of the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse.
[2] *I. e.* as long as he is true to his vocation as a minister of God.
[3] A profane priest is profane indeed.

means) : [1] " I should not study the torah and [afterwards] forget it. I should not study [the torah] and then the evil disposition not let me repeat it; or I might proclaim something which is pure as impure, and the contrary, and so shall I be ashamed in the world to come. Or maybe the Gentiles of the land and of the families of the earth will question me concerning holy things and I shall not know what to answer them, and thus I shall be ashamed before their eyes," (as it says [*ibid.* 46] : " I shall speak of Thy testimonies before Kings and shall not be ashamed.") Again it says : " Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage " (*ibid.* 54), that is to say, not only when he was in peace and comfort, but " *in the house of my pilgrimage,*" in caves and strongholds, as it says : " *My soul is always in my hand, yet I have not forgotten Thy law* " (*ibid.* 118). But what did David say, when he studied the Law and became an expert in it? " *The teaching of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver* " (*ibid.* 72). For gold and silver take a man out of both this world and of the world to come,[2] but the torah leads a man to the [true] life of this world and to the life of the world to come; as it says : " How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! " (Ps. cxxxix. 17). Again it says : *This* (*God's goodness to David*) *is all because of the Law* (torah) [*which Thou hast given*] *to man* (2 Sam. vii. 19).[3]

There are three crowns : the crown of the torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of royalty.

[1] He desires of God that :—

[2] Take a man out—riches brings forth dissatisfaction, so that the rich man does not even enjoy *this* life, and " it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." Cf. Mark x. 23, 25; and parallels.

[3] An haggadic interpretation.

Aaron was worthy of the crown of priesthood and took it. David was worthy of the crown of royalty and took it. As to the crown of the torah, lo, it still lies undisposed of, in order that those who come into the world should not have any occasion to grumble, and say: "If the crown of priesthood and the crown of royalty were still available, I might be worthy of them, and take them!" "Lo, here is the crown of the torah for all those who come into the world! For, whosoever is worthy of it,[1] I (God) count it unto him as if all the three crowns are still lying [undisposed of] and he is worthy of them all! But, whosoever is not worthy of it, I (God) consider it, as though all three are still available and he is not worthy of any of them!"

And if thou shouldest ask which of the two [crowns] is the greater? I can point to R. Shimeon ben El'azar, who says: "Who is greater, the maker of Kings or the King? Without doubt, the maker of Kings. Or, who is greater, the maker of princes or the princes? Certainly those who appoint them." Well, the existence of these two crowns (royalty and priesthood) is due to the power of the torah, as it is said (Prov. viii. 15, 16): "*By me (Divine Wisdom = the torah) kings reign and princes decree justice, by me princes rule.*"

Greater is the covenant which was made with Aaron than that which was made with David, [and yet], the former was only found worthy to have *some* good sons, while some were bad, but the latter had *only* good sons, and all because of the torah,[2] as it is said: "*If thy sons will keep my covenant and my testimonies which I will teach them, thy sons also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore*" (Ps. cxxxii. 12). Again it says: "*The*

[1] Or: who takes hold of it.
[2] *I. e.* because of David's love for the study of the torah.

conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep His Commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. xii. 13).[1]

§§ 123–124.

Purification from Uncleanness Contracted from the Dead by the Use of the Ashes of the Red Cow (Num. xix. 1–13).

§ 123.

v. 2. *"This is the statute of the law"* (Num. xix. 2).

R. El'azar says: "It says here '*statute*,' and it says there (in connexion with the Day of Atonement, Lev. xvi) '*statute*' (v. 29); as there [it had to be administered by the high-priest] in white (linen) garments, so also here."

The disciples asked R. Johanan ben Zakkai: "What vestments were worn (by the priest) at the ceremony of the red cow?" He said to them: "Gold (embroidered) ones." Said they to him: "But hast not thou, O Master, previously taught us that they were white garments?" He replied: "If I have forgotten that which my eyes have seen and my hands have handled,[2] much more (easy) is it to forget what I have [only] learnt." And why all this [assuming ignorance on the side of the master?] In order to sharpen [the wits] of the disciples. Some say, it was Hillel the Sage,[3] but he could not have said, "What my hands have handled."[4]

[1] This quotation is an attempt to whitewash Solomon, the traditional author of Ecclesiastes.

[2] Lit. "administered" (cf. 1 John i. 1).

[3] Hillel the great.

[4] *I. e.* not because he was not a priest, for neither was R. J. ben Zakkai, but because in his (Hillel's) lifetime, according to tradition, that ceremony was not performed.

§ 124.

And it shall be kept (*for mixing, as occasion may arise*) *for the congregation of the children of Israel for water* [*of the removal of sin*], v. 9. Hence, they (the sages) said: "When a cow should come and drink of the 'water of impurity,' her flesh is impure for twenty-four hours." [1]

R. Jehuda says, "[No, for] the admixture is neutralized in her intestines (and does not exist any more)." As a matter of fact, this question was already brought before thirty-eight elders in the college of Jabneh and they declared the cow's flesh pure (for food).

And it shall be kept, etc. This is one of the subjects which R. Jose the Galilean argued before R. Akiba, and the latter found his arguments inconclusive. After some time he (R. Jose) found an answer [to the objections of R. Akiba]. He (R. Jose) said to him: "May I return [to the subject] again, [as I have found an answer to your argument]?" Said he: "I would not [give permission] to every man, but thou art Jose the Galilean!" He (Jose) said: "Lo, it says, '*And it shall be kept . . . for water of impurity*' (which means) only when it is *kept* it is water of impurity, [but not in this case, when it has *not* been kept, but drunk by the cow, therefore it could not have been made impure]." Said R. Tarphon: [2] "'*I saw the ram pushing Westward*

[1] *I. e.* if the owner slaughtered her within this period (twenty-four hours) her flesh is not to be consumed.

[2] In *Tosephta Mikwaoth* vii. 11 ('Ed Zuckermandel) the same is related as follows: when a cow drank from the "water of impurity" and he (the owner) slaughtered it within twenty-four hours, as it really once happened, R. Jose the Galilean proclaimed her pure and R. Akiba impure. R. Tarphon assisted R. Jose (in argument); R. Shimeon ben Nanos assisted R. Tarphon; R. Jose the Galilean discarded the former, R. Akiba discarded R. Jose the Galilean. After some time he (R. Jose)

and Northward and Southward, so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand, but he did according to his will' (Dan. viii. 4). That is Akiba.[1] *'And I was considering. Behold as the goat came from the West and on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground, and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes, and he came to the ram that had two horns, which I have seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power, and I saw him come close unto the ram, and he waved with choler against him and smote the ram and brake his two horns and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground and stamped upon him and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.'* That is R. Jose the Galilean!" [2]

§ 131.

Israel in Shittim. Their Immoral Intercourse with the Moabite Women. Phineas' Zeal for God (Num. xxv. 1–15).

And Israel sat down in Shittim and the people began to commit whoredom (Num. xxv. 1).

Wherever in Scripture [the words] *"they sat down"* occur, it is connected with moral degradation; for

found an answer. He (the latter) said to him: What about starting (the argument) again? etc., as in our text.

Once upon a time a case like this happened and thirty-two elders were appointed in Lud (to investigate it), and they proclaimed her pure. In that hour R. Tarphon recited this verse. (Then followed the same quotations from Daniel with a more detailed distribution of *vôles*.)

R. Tarphon was specially fond of using Biblical phrases when discussing with his colleagues (cf. Bacher, *Ag. d. T.* 2nd ed., vol. i, p. 347 ff.).

[1] *I. e.* this ram.

[2] So R. Jose has confounded R. Akiba to the joy of R. Tarphon.

instance: "And the people *sat down* to eat and to drink, and rose up to play;" [1] or (Gen. xxxvii. 25): "And they (Joseph's brethren) *sat down* to eat bread (before selling Joseph)."

R. Akiba says: "Every section in Scripture is explained by the one that stands next to it." [2]

Said R. [Meir]: [3] "There are sections which are close to one another and yet as distant as is the East from the West in subject matter. On the other hand, some are far apart but yet close in subject matter. For instance, we read (Ex. vi. 8): '*Behold the children of Israel will not listen to me.*' [And, as if in answer to this] God said unto him (Moses): '*They will listen to my voice*' (Ex. iii. 18). On the other hand, we read (Lev. xxi. 9): '*And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore . . . shall be burnt with fire,*' and immediately following it we read (v. 10): '*And if the high priest,*' etc. (and there is no connexion at all with the preceding verse)." [Said R. Akiba: "There is a connexion], for when a priest's daughter is burnt for immorality, a high priest is, so to speak, burnt with her." [4] Here is a parable. What can it be likened unto? Unto a centurion who had served his term [5] but failed to enter his primipilate,[6]

[1] After making the golden calf. Idolatry and immorality closely connected, as in our passage (cf. the similar reference to this verse, 1 Cor. x. 7).

[2] Lit. "learn from it." R. Eliezer (1st century) was the first one to make use of this principle of deduction from contexts, but R. Akiba seems to have been the first to formulate this principle into a canon of interpretation.

[3] This seems to be the correct reading.

[4] Lit. "He also is burnt." That the above is the right interpretation can be seen from the parables following.

[5] Lit. "completed his years."

[6] The form *plumpilon* is evidently a corruption of *primipilus*, the first and eldest of all centurions of a Legion (cf. Perles, *Etymologische Studien*, p. 11).

(to which he would have been promoted in due time), and fled. The king sent after him, and when he was brought back, the king commanded that the head of the deserter be cut off. Before the execution, the king said: "Fill a casket with golden denars and carry it before him, and say unto him: 'If thou hadst behaved like thy colleagues, thou wouldest have received the basket of golden denars, and [preserved] thy soul,[1] but now, thou hast lost thy soul[2] and thou hast lost thy money!' So also with the daughter of a priest (who has gone astray): the high-priest goes in front of her and says to her, 'If thou hadst behaved in the way which thy mother[3] behaved, thou mightest have been found worthy to become the ancestress of a high-priest like me, but now thou hast lost thyself and also thy honour!'" Therefore these two sections are brought together.[4]

Similarly it says (Hos. i. 9): "*For ye are not my people,*" and [immediately afterwards] it says (i. 10): "*And the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them: 'Ye are not my people* [*there it shall be said unto them, ye are sons of the living God*].'"[5] What connexion is there between these verses? It is like unto a king who, being angry with his wife, sent for a scribe to come and write for her a bill of divorcement. [But] before the scribe arrived the king was again reconciled with his wife. Said the king [to himself, at the

[1] *I. e.* thy life.

[2] Cf. Matt. xvi. 26 and *Ab. de R. Nathan* (ed. Schechter), p. 39*a*. "Everyone who keeps a precept, keeps his own soul, and everyone who destroys one precept of the Law, loses (destroys) his own soul."

[3] Progenitors.

[4] The following takes up R. Akiba's principle again.

[5] Cf. for the allegorical interpretation of this verse in the Early Church, Rom. ix. 26 (applied to the Gentiles).

arrival of the scribe] : " Should the scribe go back as soon as he has come, without having done anything? " Therefore he said to him : " Come and write that I have doubled her dowry." [1]

Similarly it says (Hos. xiv. 1) : " *Samaria must be condemned, for she hath rebelled against her God,*" and [immediately afterwards, v. 2] it says : " *O Israel return unto the Lord thy God.*" What is the connexion? [2] Here is a parable. Whereunto can it be likened? Unto a province which rebelled against its king. The king sent out a general [3] with orders to devastate that province. That general was experienced and cool-headed. He said to them (the rebellious province) : " Take heed! Otherwise I will do unto you as I have done unto such and such a province, and with such and such a government." [4] Therefore it says : " *Samaria must be condemned, for she has rebelled against her God,*" and [immediately afterwards] : " *Return, O Israel.*" [5]

And Israel dwelt in Shittim. [Which means] : in the place of *folly* (*Shetuth*).[6] For Israel was in the wilderness, a place where there were no fields,[7] nor fig trees, nor vines, nor pomegranates.[8] They started war with Sihon and Og, who fell into their hands, and they (the Israelites) took away all the booty.[9] Now, this proud and overweening empire (Rome) had only four provinces

[1] The marriage contract, containing, among other things, a certain amount due to the wife on her husband's death or on being divorced.—God is the King who tells the prophet that he must separate from Israel, because of her sin. But soon they are reconciled, and their union is stronger than ever.

[2] *I. e.* the first verse pronounces the doom of Samaria and the second sounds more hopeful to Israel as a whole.

[3] πολέμαρχος. [4] ἐπαρχία.

[5] " Israel " as distinct from " Samaria " should take a lesson from what happened to the latter!

[6] Play on words. [7] Lit. " not a place of seed."

[8] Cf. Deut. viii. 8.

[9] Lit. " all that was theirs."

worthy of the name,[1] namely, Asia,[2] Alexandria, Carthage [3] and Antioch; but those (Sihon and Og) had sixty cities, all of which were worthy to be royal residential cities, as it is said (Deut. iii. 4): "*And we took all his cities . . . sixty cities, all the regions of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.*" [4] And Israel came and started war against them and conquered them and took away everything belonging to them. But as soon as Israel had taken their fill of plunder, they began to squander it; they tore garments and threw them away; killed cattle and threw them away; for they only looked for silver and gold vessels, as it is said: "*But all the cattle and the spoil of the cities we spoilt to ourselves.*" [5] Then they came "*and settled themselves in Shittim,*" in the place [where they committed] folly. At that time [6] the Amorites and the Moabites stood up and erected tents from Bet-Jeshimoth to the snowy mountains, and there were women selling sweetmeats of all kinds, and the Israelites ate and drank. It happened then, that when one of them strolled about in the market-place, desiring to buy an article from an old woman, who asked the proper price for it, a young woman would call from within [the tent] and say: "Come and take it for less!" And he would buy it from her on that first day. On the second day she would say to him: "Come inside and choose for thyself! Thou art not a stranger!" Then he would enter and find there a pitcher full of Ammonite wine (the wine of the Gentiles was at that time not forbidden yet). She would say

[1] Lit. "of royalty," *i. e.* worthy of being a metropolis.

[2] *Asia proconsularis.* But perhaps *Ephesus* is meant here; cf. Krauss, *Griechische and lat. Lehnwörter* im Talmud und Midrasch.

[3] Rebuilt under the Roman Empire.

[4] *I. e.* it suggests that each of the sixty could be a kingdom.

[5] *bazonu* (we took as spoil) is so interpreted.

[6] Lit. "hour."

to him: "Wouldst like some wine?" And he would drink, and the wine would burn in him, and he would say to her: "Surrender thyself to me!" But she would bring out an impression of the idol Peor from under her breast-band [1] and say to him: "Master (Rabbi), if thou wilt that I should surrender myself to thee, fall down and worship this!" But he would say to her: "Shall I worship an idol?" She: "What harm will it do to thee? Thou hast only to uncover thyself before it!" And he would do it. (Hence they [the sages] have said: "He who uncovers himself to Baal Peor breaks a negative commandment, for such is its cult." The same applies also to him who tosses a stone on a *merkilis*.) [2] And the wine would burn in him, and he would say: "Surrender thyself to me!" And she would reply: "If thou wilt that I should surrender myself to thee, renounce the law of Moses!" And he would do it; as it is said (Hosea ix. 10): "They went to Baal Peor and dedicated themselves to shame, and their abomination was according as they loved."

At last, they (the Moabites) would again arrange (idolatrous) banquets for them and invite them, and they would partake of them; as it is said: "*And they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods.*" [3]

R. El'azar ben Shammua [4] says: "As it is impossible for a doornail to be taken out [5] from the door without

[1] φαδκία.

[2] Mercurius (Hermes). In Rabbinic literature it means always the *statue* of Mercurius; cf. Friederich, *Symbolische Mythologie der Natur*, p. 123. The statue was on the top of a square-shaped pillar, placed in prominent positions at cross-roads. Passers-by threw stones at it, dedicating them to Hermes, the patron deity of the wayfarer.

[3] Cf. the description of the Dervish order Seyyed Ahmed el Bedawy in *Qu. Statement of Palestine Expl. Fund*, Jan. 1922, p. 28.

[4] Pupil of R. Akiba, born at Alexandria; lived during nearly the whole of the 2nd century.

[5] Lit. "to separate itself."

extracting some of the wood, so it is impossible for Israel to separate itself from [the worship] of Peor [1] without [losing] souls.

It happened, that whilst Menaḥem from Gufta in the district Ariah [2] was rolling (earthen) jugs, the prince (guardian angel) of Peor [3] rose against him. He (Menaḥem) threw the spear [4] on him and ran away. He appeared again the second night and said to him: "Menaḥem, wilt thou curse me again?" He, taking fright, said: "From now on I shall not curse thee any more." [5]

There is another story: Sabta of Avlas [6] let his donkey on hire to a Gentile (pagan) woman. When they arrived at the outskirts of the city, she said to him, "Wait until I have been in the temple of my God." When she came out from there, he said to her: "Wait thou for me until I did what you did." Said she: "Art thou not a Jew?" He replied: "What does it matter to thee [if I go?]" He entered and scratched himself on the nose of the [image of] Peor. And all the pagans laughed at him and said: "Never has any man behaved like this one!"

It also happened once that a certain pagan prince came from a far country to worship Peor. He said to the ministers of Peor: "Bring me a bullock or a ram that I may sacrifice to Peor." But they said: "It is

[1] *I. e.* to give it up.

[2] Tarichaea, south of Tiberias; cf. Neubauer, *Geographie du Talmud*, p. 21*b*.

[3] The belief that the heathen divinities were under the rule of Principalities and Powers (cf. Eph. iii. 10, vi. 12 and parallels) is also suggested in the LXX of Deut. xxxii. 8; cf. Sirach xvii. 17; Daniel x. 13.

[4] Syr. *shappuda*.

[5] I find no parallel for this peculiar story in Rabbinic sources, but it reminds one of Luther's ink-bottle!

[6] Probably identical with Pylæ Cilicæ.

not necessary to bring this sacrifice. What thou needest is only to uncover thyself before him." The prince was angry at this answer and called unto his servants [1] saying: "Fall upon these ministers of Peor and beat them." And they did so and crushed the heads of those ministers. And when the prince saw it, he said: "Woe unto you and to your god!" [2]

And the Lord said unto Moses: Take all the heads of the people and execute them before the Lord before the sun (Num. xxv. 4).

God said to him: "Appoint thee heads of the people and judges, that they may crucify [3] the sinners." [4]

And Moses said unto the judges of Israel: Slay all the men that joined themselves to Baal Peor. The tribe of Shimeon repaired to Zimri. They said to him: "Thou sittest quietly, whilst we are condemned to death!" He, at once, assembled twenty-four thousand men from among his tribe and went to Cosby (the Midianite woman) and said to her: "Surrender thyself to me." She replied: "I will only surrender myself to the greatest among you, who is like Moses thy master." Said he: "I am also the head of a tribe, and, what is more, my tribe has the seniority of his." [5] He took hold of her by her hand and led her into the midst of all Israel (cf. v. 6). At that time, Phineas stood up and said: "Is there no man here who will kill and be killed? Where are the lions? *'Juda is a lion's whelp'* (Gen. xlix. 1). *'Dan is a lion's whelp'* (Deut. xxxiii. 22)."

[1] *Singulares.* [2] Lit. "error."

[3] Cf. R.V. of the Hebrew *hoḳ'a* and W. R. Smith (*Religion of the Semites*, 1st ed., p. 398).

[4] This is an attempt to get rid of the difference between this and the following verses, where it is said that only the actual offenders were executed.

[5] Lit. "My tribe is greater than his, for I am according to the second (Shimeon) and he (Moses) is according to the third (Levi)."

He began to shout. But when he saw that all kept silent (no response), he stood up from among his colleagues [1] and, taking off the iron head from the javelin, he put it into his belt, then he went leaning upon the handle as upon a staff.[2] They said to him: "Phineas, where goest thou?" He replied: "Is not [the tribe of] Levi to be found wherever the tribe of Shimeon is?" [3] They said: "Let him enter!"

The zealots [4] permitted it,[5] and as soon as he entered,[6] God worked six miracles for him.[7] . . . The tribe of Shimeon came to the tribe of Levi and said: "Should the son of the daughter of this Puti [8] seek to destroy (uproot) a whole tribe of Israel?" As soon as God saw that all despised him (Phineas) (for his action), God began to praise him: "*Phineas, the son of Eleasar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned back my wrath from (pouring itself out) upon the children of Israel*" (v. 25). Do we not know whose son he is? [9] [It refers to the attitude of the people; God said]: "He is a priest, the son of a priest, a zealot, the son of a zealot; one who turneth back the wrath, etc."

Therefore say: I give him my covenant, peace.

During the first Temple eighteen High-priests were descended from Phineas, but during the second

[1] "Sanhedrin," used in the sense of academy, college. Cf. Targum on Psalm xlv. 1.

[2] *I. e.* to avoid suspicion.

[3] *I. e.* he pretended that he was about to follow the example of Zimri. "Shimeon and Levi are brothers."

[4] Lit. "the Pharisees"!

[5] That he should perform the lynching.

[6] The tent where the offenders were.

[7] Here follows a description of the miracles, unsuitable for translation.

[8] A disparaging abbreviation of Putiel, the father-in-law of El'azar, the father of Phineas. The Midrash identifies him with Jethro (cf. Mekilta Yithro).

[9] Why mention it here? (Cf. for what seems to be a fixed *motif*, Luke iv. 22, and parallels.)

Temple there were eighty.[1] Because (during the second Temple) they used to buy (the high-priesthood) with money, so their years were shortened, (as a punishment from God).

It once happened that one (who wished to be made high-priest] sent [to the Gentile Procurator, as a bribe], by his son, two silver measures, the strikes [2] of which were also of silver. Then came another [with the same ambition] who sent, through his son, an even greater gift of *three golden* measures, *their* strikes being also of gold. This gave rise among the people to the proverb : " The ass has upset the lamp." [3]

[1] Josephus enumerates only fifty-two high-priests under the second Temple, omitting the further appointments of Hyrcanus II, Hannanel, and Joazar.

[2] An instrument used to level the measure of grain.

[3] This seems to be the correct reading. Cf. also Abba Jose ben Ḥanin's (last decade before the destruction of the Temple) criticism of some of the priestly families : " Woe unto me for the house of Baithus and its rods; woe unto me for the house of Ḥanin and its calumnious whisperings; woe unto me for the house of Katros and its pens." *Pes. 57a.*

The proverb concerning the ass and the lamp is also related (*Shab.* 116*d* ff.) in connexion with an interesting repartee of R. Gamaliel II and his sister Salome (Imma Shalom). Imma Shalom, the wife of R. Eliezer, was the sister of R. Gamaliel II. There was in her neighbourhood a (Christian) philosopher who was reputed to be unbribeable. They planned to try him, so Imma Shalom sent him a lamp of gold and then appeared before him. She said : " I desire that they should divide with me the family property." He said (to the other members of the family) : " Divide it." But they said : " For us it is written, ' where there is a son, a daughter does not inherit.' " He replied : " From the day when ye were exiled from your own land the Law of Moses has been taken away, and the Gospel (*Evangelion*) has been given in its stead, and there it is written : ' A son and a daughter shall inherit alike.' " The next day R. Gamaliel in his turn sent the " unbribeable " philosopher a Lybian ass. Then the philosopher altered his decision, saying : " I have now looked further to the end of the book (the Gospels), and in it is written, ' I am not come to take away from the Law of Moses or add to it,' and in it (the Law of Moses) it is written, ' Where there is a son, a daughter does not inherit.' " Imma Shalom, on hearing this, said to him, " Let thy light shine as a

And it should be to him and to his seed as the covenant of an everlasting priesthood. This refers to the twenty-four priestly gifts given to the priests.

Because he was jealous for his God and made an atonement for the children of Israel.

"Because he hath put out his soul unto death" (Isa. liii. 12).[1] *And he brought an atonement (wa-jekapper) for the children of Israel.* It does not say here "kipper," he atoned once and for all, but "jekapper";[2] for until this present time hath he not ceased (to do so), but he stands and atones, until the time shall come when the dead will live again.[3]

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lamp!" R. Gamaliel said to her, "The ass has come and trodden out the lamp."

From our Sifre passage it is quite obvious that the proverb gave rise to this story and not the story to the proverb. In the Sifre text the proverb is used as being both appropriate and familiar, since the bribes mentioned here are neither lamps nor asses. It is strange that those scholars who have written on Christianity in the Talmud, *e. g.* Laible, Herford, and last, but not least, Klausner (Heb. Life of Jesus of Nazareth) never refer to this passage in Sifre, although they make use of the Talmudic story. See also *Pesikta de Rab Kahana*, 122 ff.; *Yama* 38; *Lev. R.* c. 21; and cf. E. B. Nicholson, *The Gospel acc. to the Heb.*, p. 146; also Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, p. 48; and Levertoff, *Rel. Denk. d. Hasidim*, p. 126.

[1] This seems to be a fragment of a larger section where Isa. liii. was interpreted as referring to Phineas. According to Sirach xiv. 23, he is "the third in glory." Cf. also Targum-Pseudo-Jonathan on this passage, and *Pirḳe de R. El.* xlvii.

[2] This seems to be the right reading: "It does not say here 'he brought atonement,' but 'he bringeth atonement.'" The glorification of Phineas in Rabbinic legend goes so far as to identify him with the Prophet Elijah, who also was zealous for God, and, according to one stream of Jewish tradition, was a priest. See Targ. Yer. on this section, *Pirḳe R. El.* xlii. Cf. Aphraates, *Homilies*, ed. Wright, p. 314; *Origen*, ed. Migne, xiv. 225; Epiphanius, *Haereses*, lv. 3 *passim*. As the forerunner of the Messiah (based on Mal. iv. 3; cf. Gospels) and being of mysterious origin, and, especially, because of his "Ascension into Heaven," Elijah takes the *rôle* of "reconciler" between God and Israel.

[3] General Resurrection.

Appendix.

The paragraphs which I have omitted to translate, consisting of Halakic and Haggadic portions, and not containing much of value, either in style or subject matter, have, nevertheless, some characteristic sayings and parables scattered about among much that is irrelevant, and even tedious.

For instance, in commenting on Num. xxvii. 1–12, we have an Haggadic and an Halakic portion. In the Haggadic portion the description of the daughters of Zelophehad holding council among themselves, when they heard that the Land was to be apportioned among the tribes, is very graphic. They said: "God's pity is not as man's pity, man considers only males, but He, who called forth the world and it was, shews His mercy to all alike, as it is said (Ps. cxxxvi. 25): 'He giveth bread to all flesh' and (Ps. cxlvii. 9) 'He giveth food to the beast.'"

The Halakic portion deals with the law of inheritance.

On verse 7 ("The daughters of Zelophehad speak right") the comment is: God says: "The daughters of Zelophehad are quite justified in their claims, for such a paragraph is written before me in the Highest," meaning to say "in Heaven." This quaint conception about God Himself being governed by a written law, is founded on the idea of the pre-existence of the torah.

In the Halakic portion on the end of verse 11, we find this: "The torah has given authority (knowledge or wisdom) to the future generations of its expounders to deduce laws from it," thus seeming to express the Rabbinical "idea of development," and finding a Scriptural basis for the traditional methods of exegesis.

Concerning Moses, the Sifre treats the dozen verses

(*ibid.* 12–23) in many pages of long-drawn-out and intricate casuistry. It depicts Moses on Mount Nebo as being astonished to find himself there, and inclined to rejoice in a hope that God had changed His mind (lit. "God has surely absolved Himself from His own vow"). For this reason, Moses entreats God to allow him to enter the Promised Land, "and he began to pour out his supplications before God." Apropos of this, we find the following. "Now, if Moses, the wisest of the wise, the father of the prophets, was so importunate, although he knew that God's decision had already been made . . . the more should ordinary mortals not give up hope, but be instant in prayer" (cf. Luke xviii. 1–8).

On God's answer to Moses' entreaties: "Let it suffice thee" (Deut. iii. 26), one of the comments is: "Plenty is stored up for thee and is hidden for thee (in Heaven)," and refers to Ps. xxxi. 20, and Isa. lxiv. 3. St. Paul seems to have applied this last quotation similarly; cf. 1 Cor. ii. 9, and Lightfoot, *St. Clement of Rome*, I. p. 390.

When on Pisgah God says to Moses: "This land, I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes" (Deut. xxxiv. 4), one of the comments of R. Akiba on it is: "This suggests that God shewed Moses all parts of the promised land like unto a table, all set and ready for a feast." Rabbi Eliezer comments: "God gave power unto the eyes of Moses, so that he could see the world from end to end." Cf. Matt. iv. 8. It is further inferred that this power is bestowed upon all the righteous.

Commenting on Num. xxvii. 13 and 14, the following parable is used as an illustration: "Two women were brought up for punishment; the one had committed a great sin, while the other had only stolen some worthless

figs of the Sabbatical year. The one who had stolen the figs said: 'I beg that my sin be made known.' For she feared that those who stood by should think her sin was like unto that of the other woman. Therefore, the officers of the law tied the figs round her neck, and a herald walked before her, and called out: 'This woman was punished because she stole some worthless figs of the Sabbatical year.'" And this is followed by the comment: R. El'azar of Modi'im says: "Come and see how beloved of God are the righteous, for when He mentions their death, he mentions also their sin. This is in order that those who come after them should not be able to say: 'These good men committed secret sins.'"

On Num. xxvii. 16 the following eschatological remark is interesting: Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Rabbi Jose the Galilean, says: "Have this sign in thine hand (keep this in mind): as long as a man is alive, his soul is entrusted to its Creator. As soon as he dies, his soul is put into the treasury." The quotation given is 1 Sam. xxv. 29. The souls of the righteous only are "put into the treasury"; of those of the wicked it says (*ibid.*), "but the souls of thine enemies shall he *sling out*," whether this is taken to mean total annihilation, or Gehenna, is not clear (§ 139). Num. xxvii. 17 is connected allegorically with Cant. i. 7. "O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock," etc., is interpreted as "O, thou most excellent among the prophets, go thou," etc. And then: "This suggests that God has shown Moses all the future representatives of Israel, who were to minister to them from that day, unto the time of the Resurrection of the dead" (cf. Mark ix. 4).

The following parable explains the connexion between Num. xxviii. 1–2 and the preceding section.

" The wife of a king lay dying, and she said to the king: ' I pray thee, take care of my children.' But he replied: ' Dear wife, instead of reminding me of my duty towards our children, thou oughtest rather to remind them not to be disobedient, or to treat me with disrespect.' So God said unto Moses: ' Instead of reminding Me concerning My children, thou shouldst remind My children concerning Me, that they should not rebel against Me, and should not transfer My honour to strange gods.' Therefore this section: ' Command the children of Israel, etc.' "

" A sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord." On this R. Shimeon ben Azzai says: " Come and see: In all the offerings (mentioned) in the torah it is not said in connexion with them, either ' Elohim,' nor ' thy Elohim,' nor yet ' Zebaoth '; but ' JH ' (Tetragrammaton). This, so as not to give the Minim (probably, in this case, the Hebrew Christians) an occasion to humble us." This appears to me to indicate the manner in which the Hebrew Christians of that day argued to their fellow-Jews concerning the Atonement of Christ. They, doubtless, used the sacrificial system (cf. the Epistle to the Hebrews) to point out the meaning of the Atonement, and, from the plural forms of the names of God in the O.T., the Christian interpretation of the Divine Unity, of which the above is evidently the refutation of the period.

Then, on " of a *sweet savour* unto the Lord," it says that these words teach that, since " a sweet savour " indicates that God finds pleasure in the sacrifice, therefore, " whether a man brings many sacrifices or few, it is all the same to God," as of an ox, a sheep, or even a fowl, the words " a sweet savour " are used. Further, it is commented: " There is no eating and drinking with God. He is pleased when His will has been

done." The quotations are appropriately from Ps. l. 11–13.

In connexion with a lengthy Halakic discussion on Num. xxviii. 26, there comes an interesting incident. It appears that R. Tarphon and R. Jehuda ben Naḥman were having a heated argument on this verse in the presence of R. Akiba (end of § 148). R. Jehuda ben Naḥman got the better of R. Tarphon, and his delight was so great that his face shone with pleasure. R. Akiba eyed him sternly, and said, "Thou appearest to be pleased that thou hast won the victory over the venerable R. Tarphon." And then he added, after a pause, "I wonder whether thou wilt live long." Someone who had either been present at the time, or heard of this, then relates that, after a time he came to that place again and sought to find R. Jehuda ben Naḥman, saying, "Where is R. Jehuda ben Naḥman?" and they said to him: "He is gone" (*i. e.* dead). This incident is interesting for several reasons. For one thing, it gives us a vivid picture of the academic life of that day; secondly, we get a flash of strong light upon the character of R. Akiba. The death of R. Jehuda is related as a miracle, and, therefore, it contradicts a theory of Prof. Schlatter, who, in his *Das Wunder in der Synagoge*, points out that miracle-workers in contemporary Judaism are not to be found among the rabbis, but among special saints, who devoted their lives more to prayer than to study.

In connexion with the sins of intention, in regard to vows (Num. xxx. 8), we find the following illustration (§ 153). If a man intends to eat pork, but eats lamb, thinking it to be pork, it is to be considered that he really had eaten pork, and his penance is to fit that sin (lit. "requires forgiveness and atonement").

It is stated, in connexion with the words "then he

shall bear her iniquity," that anyone who causes his neighbour to stumble, more than shares the sin, and, by analogy, he who causes his neighbour to do good, the credit of the good act belongs primarily to the former. Cf. Mark ix. 41–43.

In § 157, which, among other things, deals with Balaam's counsel (Num. xxxi. 16), Balaam says to the Midianites: "Even if ye should gather together all the lusts of the world ye shall not be able to prevail against them. Are you more numerous than the Egyptians? But come, I will advise you. The God of this people (Israel) hates fornication." The commentator continues: "It is a fact—as long as Israel doeth the will of God He fights for them, as it is said, 'the Lord will fight for you' (Ex. xiv. 14). But when they do not the will of God, He, as it were, fights against them—as it is said: 'And He was turned to become their enemy, He fought against them' (Isa. lxiii. 10). And not only that, but they make the All-Merciful One become, as it were, cruel—as it is said: 'The Lord has become like an enemy' (Lam. ii. 5)."

§§ 159–161 contain lengthy Halakic comments on homicide, in connexion with the Cities of Refuge (Num. xxxv), which, having been incorporated in the Mishna Sanhedrin, one of this series, it was not needful to repeat them here. But the following reminiscence is of interest, which comes in § 161, the last paragraph of our Midrash.

It once happened that two priests were running up the steps leading to the Altar. They ran abreast, but on reaching the top step, the one outstripped the other by four ells. The one who was thus left behind took a knife, and, in his anger, stuck it into the breast of the other, so that he fell dead at the foot of the Altar. R. Zadduk came and stood on the steps of the Temple-

hall and said: "Hear me, brethren, House of Israel! It says (Deut. xxi. 1): 'If there be found slain, etc. . . . and they shall measure it unto the cities.' Let us now measure, in order that we may know who it is that is to bring this heifer" (*i. e.* is this crime to be attributed to the corruption of the priests or to that of the people). They were all overcome with weeping. Just then, the father of the dead priest arrived, and found that his son was still struggling in his death agony. He turned to them all, saying: "May I be your atonement! My son is still breathing, so the knife has not become defiled." Then comes the following remark: "From this we see that the defilement of knives was of more consequence to them than the crime of murder." ("May I be your atonement," a popular exclamation of the period.)

In order to avoid ending on this dolefully critical note, the Midrash ends with remarks on the Shekina, similar to those with which it began, and now connecting them with the last words of Num. xxi. 23, for although it says: "This passage proclaims that homicide defiles the land and causes the Shekina to depart, and the Temple to be destroyed," yet R. Nathan remarks: "What love hath God bestowed upon Israel, that wherever they were banished the Shekina was with them: 'They were banished to Egypt, the Shekina went with them,' etc." And the whole ends with a parable: Rabbi says: Here is a parable. It is like unto a king who said unto his minister: "If thou seekest me, behold I am with my son," and repeated: "When thou seekest me, remember, always, wherever my son is, I am to be found," as it is written (Lev. xvi. 16; Num. v. 3): "For I, the Lord, dwell in the midst of the children of Israel."

* * * * * *

It may not be out of place to say here that I have used *editio princeps*, Venice, 1545, but I have compared it with the B. Mus. MS. Add. 16006. I have also made use of the Horovitz ed. (*Corpus Tannaiticum Pars Tertia : Siphre d'be Rab.* Leipzig, 1917).

I am indebted to my wife for undertaking the troublesome task of reading the proofs.

When the translations of Mekilta, Sifra, Sifre to Deuteronomy, are published, (which translations I have now almost completed), we shall then have practically all the earliest sources of traditional Jewish exegesis for the first time in English. As is known, with the exception of Mekilta, (of which there is a German translation by Wünsche), they have none of them been translated before into any modern language.

I consider it my duty to state here that Prof. G. Kitte has preceded me in the suggestion that the passage on p. 100 (see note 6) refers to St. Paul. In his interesting collection of short studies entitled *Rabbinica*, published by the Forschungsinstitut für vergleichende Religionsgeschichte der Univ. Leipzig, he deals with this passage in Sifre and comes to the same conclusion.

P. P. L.

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* Mentioned only once in the Mishna (Ḥagiga I. 7); as a Jewish name it occurs also in Justin, *Dial. c. Tryph.*, ch. 85.

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